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CAROLVS ROMA NORX IMPERATOR
HISPANIARV̄ REX FOELICISS
ATQ CATHOL

Charles V in 1519

From an old print



Letters of Cortes

The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes to the Emperor Charles V.

Translated, and Edited, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes Compiled from Original Sources

By
Francis Augustus MacNutt

In Two Volumes

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THIRD LETTER

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Sent by Fernando Cortes, Captain and Superior Justice of Yucatan, called the New Spain of the Ocean Sea, to the Very High and Most Potent and Invincible Lord, Don Carlos, August Emperor and King of Spain, Our Lord, concerning the things transpired and very worthy of admiration in the conquest and recovery of the very great and marvellous city of Temixtitan, and of the other provinces subject to it which had revolted. In which city and provinces the said Captain and Spaniards obtained great and signal victories, worthy of perpetual memory. Likewise, relation is made how the South Sea has been discovered; and many other and great provinces, very rich in mines of gold, and pearls, and precious stones, and information is even had that there are spices.

Very High and Most Powerful Prince, Very Catholic and Invincible Emperor, King and Lord. With Alonzo de Mendoza, native of Medellin, whom I sent from this New Spain on the fifth of March of the past year of 1521, I despatched a second account to Your Majesty of everything that had happened here; this I finished writing on the thirtieth of October of the year 1520, but on account of very contrary winds and the loss of three ships, one of which I had prepared to send with the said account to Your Majesty, and the two others to bring help from the island of Hispaniola, there was much delay in the said Mendoza's departure, as I more fully wrote by him to Your Majesty. In the closing part of that despatch

I told Your Majesty how, after the Indians of Temixtitan had expelled us by force, I had marched against the province of Tepeaca, one of its vassals which had rebelled against us, and that, with the Spaniards who remained, and our friendly Indians, I had made war on them, and reduced them to the service of Your Majesty. I also said that the past treachery and the great sufferings and deaths of the Spaniards were so fresh in our hearts, that my determination was to return against the inhabitants of that capital, who had been the cause of all; that I had begun to build thirteen brigantines, with which to do them all the damage I could from the lake, if they persevered in their wicked intention; that while the said brigantines were being made, and we and the friendly Indians were preparing ourselves to return against the enemy, I had sent for reinforcements of people, and horses, and artillery, and arms, to the island of Hispaniola, where I had written regarding it to Your Majesty's officials who reside there, sending them monies for the necessary outlay and expenses. I also assured Your Majesty that, till we were victorious over the enemy, I would neither think of rest, nor would I cease to use all possible solicitude to accomplish it, disregarding whatever danger and hardship might overtake me; and that with this determination I was preparing to leave the said province of Tepeaca.

I likewise made known to Your Majesty how a caravel, belonging to Francisco de Garay, Lieutenant Governor of the island of Jamaica, had arrived in great distress at the port of Vera Cruz, carrying about thirty men, who said that two other ships had sailed for the river of Panuco, where the natives had routed one of Francisco de Garay's captains; and it was feared if these landed there, that they would suffer injury from the natives along the said river. I likewise wrote to Your Majesty that I had immediately determined to send another

caravel in search of the said ships, to let them know what had happened.

After writing this, it pleased God that one of these ships should reach the port of Vera Cruz, on board of which there was a captain with about a hundred and twenty men. He learned there how Garay's former party had been routed. The captain who was routed assured them that they could not land at the river of Panuco without sustaining much harm from the Indians. While they still lay in the said port, with the determination to go to that river, a storm with violent wind arose which drove the ship out to sea, breaking the cables, and driving it into a port, called San Juan, twelve leagues higher up the coast, where, after disembarking all the people, and seven or eight horses, and as many mares which they had brought, they beached the ship, which leaked badly. As soon as this was made known to me, I wrote to the captain immediately, telling him that I was much grieved at what had happened to him, and that I had sent orders to my lieutenant at Vera Cruz that he and his people should be given a very good reception and whatever they might need, and also to ascertain their plans; and that, if all or any of them wished to return in the ships which were lying there, he should give them permission and facilitate their departure. The captain and his men determined to remain, and join me, but we know nothing about the other ships thus far, and, as so long a time has already elapsed, we much doubt of their being saved; may God have taken them to a good port!

Being about to leave the province of Tepeaca, I learned that two provinces, called Cecatami and Xalazingo, subject to the lord of Temixtitan, had rebelled, and on the road from the city of Vera Cruz thither, which passes that way, they had killed some Spaniards. To render that road secure, and to administer chastisement to them

in case they did not submit peaceably, I sent a captain with twenty horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers, ordering him, on the part of Your Majesty, to require the natives of those provinces to submit peaceably as vassals of Your Majesty, as they had done heretofore, and to use all possible moderation with them; but, if they would not receive him peaceably, to make war on them. I told him when he had done that, and quieted these two provinces, to return with his men to Tascaltecal, where I would wait for him. He left in the beginning of the month of December 1520, and pursued his road to those provinces which were about twenty leagues distant.

Departure from Tepeaca

Having despatched this business, Very Powerful Lord, I left Segura de la Frontera, in the province of Tepeaca, at mid-December of that year, placing a captain with sixty men there because the natives besought me greatly to do so; and I sent all my people on foot to the city of Tascaltecal, where the brigantines were being built, which is nine or ten leagues from Tepeaca, while I with twenty horsemen went that day to sleep in the city of Cholula. The inhabitants desired my coming on account of the sickness of small-pox,[1] which also affected the natives of these countries, and those of the islands. Many of their caciques having died from it, they desired that by my action, and with their approval, others should be appointed in their places. We were very well received by them on our arrival, and, having finished this business to their satisfaction in the manner I have stated, and having explained to them my purpose to make war on the province of Mexico and Temixtitan, I besought them, that, inasmuch as they were vassals of Your Majesty, they should stand firm in their friendship with us, as we would with them till death. I besought them also to aid me

[1] Said to have been introduced by a negro slave who came with Panfilo de Narvaez (Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. lxxx.).

with people during the war, and to treat well the Spaniards who would be coming and going through their country, which as friends they were obliged to do. They promised to do this, and having stayed two or three days in their city, I left for Tascaltecal, a distance of six leagues, and, on my arrival there, all the Spaniards and those of the city met me with great rejoicing at my coming. The next day all the chiefs of the city and provinces came to speak to me, and told me how Magiscatcin, who was the principal lord of all of them, had died of that illness, the small-pox, and that they knew I would be much grieved by it as he was my great friend. His son, about twelve or thirteen years old, survived, to whom all the lordship of his father now belonged, and they prayed me to recognise him as his heir. And I in the name of Your Majesty did this, at which all of them remained very satisfied.

When I arrived in this city, I found that the master workmen and carpenters had used great diligence with the joining and planking of the brigantines, and that they had accomplished a very reasonable amount of work. I immediately arranged to send to Vera Cruz for all the iron and nails they had there, together with the sails and tackle and other needful things for them; and, as we had no pitch, I ordered certain Spaniards to make it in a neighbouring forest. All provisions for the brigantines were thus ordered to be ready in time, so that, please God, I might, on arriving in the province of Mexico and Temixtitan, send for them from there, a distance of sixteen leagues from the city of Tascaltecal. During the fifteen days I remained there, I did nothing but urge on the master workmen, and the preparation of arms for our march.

Two days before Christmas, the captain, who had gone to the provinces of Cecatami and Xalazingo, arrived with the people on foot and horseback, and I learned

how some of the natives had fought them, but that, at the end, some of their free will, and some by compulsion, had sued for peace. They brought me some lords of those provinces, whom, notwithstanding that they were entirely to blame for their rebellion and the death of the Christians, I pardoned, because they promised me that from henceforth they would be good and loyal vassals of Your Majesty. Thus, that undertaking was finished, in which Your Majesty was well served, not only in the pacification of those natives, but also in insuring the safety of all the Spaniards who will have to come and go through these provinces, to and from the city of Vera Cruz.

Review of the Forces at Tlascala

The second day after Christmas, I held a review in the city of Tascaltecal, and found forty horsemen and five hundred and fifty foot-soldiers, eighty of them cross-bowmen and musketeers, with eight or nine field-pieces, but very little powder. I divided the horsemen into four troops of ten each, and formed nine captaincies of sixty Spanish foot each. All being assembled for this review, I spoke to them as follows: They already knew that they and I had come to serve Your Sacred Majesty by settling in this country; and they likewise knew how all the natives of it had acknowledged themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, and how they had persevered as such, receiving good deeds from us and we from them, until, without any cause, all the inhabitants of Culua including the people of the great city of Temixtitan, and those of all the other provinces subject to it, had revolted against Your Majesty; yet more, they had killed many of our relatives and friends, and had expelled us from their country. That they should remember how many dangers and hardships we had endured, and how it was profitable to the service of God and Your Catholic Majesty to return and recover what was left,

inasmuch as we had just causes and good reasons on our side. One cause was because we fought for the spread of our Faith, and against barbarians; another was because we served Your Majesty; another was for the security of our lives; and another because we had many natives, our friends, to help us. All these were strong motives to animate our hearts; for the same reasons I told them to cheer up and be brave. In the name of Your Majesty, I had made certain ordinances for maintaining discipline and regulating the affairs of the war, which I then immediately published. I enjoined them to likewise comply with these, because much service would be rendered by so doing, to God, and Your Majesty. They all promised to do so and to comply with them, declaring they would very gladly die for our Faith and Your Majesty's service, or return to recover the loss, and revenge so great a treachery as had been done by the people of Temixtitan and their allies. I, in the name of Your Majesty, thanked them for it. After this we returned to our camp on the day after the review in good spirits.

The next day, which was the feast of St. John the Evangelist, I had all the chiefs of the province of Tascaltecal assembled, and told them that they already knew I was about to leave the next day to enter the country of our enemies; that they must see that the city of Temixtitan could not be captured without the brigantines which were being built, and that hence I prayed that they would furnish everything necessary to the workmen and the other Spaniards I left there, and would treat them well as they had always treated us. I said also that they should be prepared, if God should give us the victory, whenever I should send from the city of Tasaico[1] for the joinings, planks, and other materials for the brigantines, to send them. They promised to do so, and they also wished to send some warriors with me at once, declaring

[1] Texcoco.

that when the brigantines started they would go with all their people, for they wished to die where I died, and to revenge themselves on the Culuans their mortal enemies.

Next day which was the twenty-eighth of December, the Feast of the Innocents, I left with all my people in good order, and we marched six leagues from Tascaltecal to a town called Tezmoluca,[1] belonging to the province of Guajocingo, whose natives have always kept the same friendship and alliance with us as the natives of Tascaltecal; and there we rested that night.

In my other account, Very Catholic Sire, I said that I had been informed that the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan were preparing many arms, constructing earth-works and fortifications, and gathering forces for resisting our entrance into the country; for they already knew that I intended to return against them. I was aware of this, and knowing how dextrous and crafty they were in matters of war, I many times pondered how we could surprise them; for they knew that we had information of three roads or entrances, by each of which we might advance into their country. I determined to enter by the road of Tezmoluca, because as its pass was the roughest and steepest of all, I felt sure that we would not encounter much resistance there, nor would they be so much on their guard.

The March to Mexico

The next day after the Feast of the Innocents, having heard Mass, and recommended ourselves to God, we left the town of Tezmoluca, I leading the van-guard, with ten horsemen, and sixty light foot-soldiers, all able men of war. We pursued our road, leading up to the pass with all possible order, and sleeping four leagues from Tezmoluca on the top of the pass which is already within the limits of Culua. Although great cold prevailed, we made

[1] Tezmulocan: present name is San Martin Tesmelucan, in the state of Puebla.

ourselves comfortable that night with large quantities of wood we found there, and on the next morning, a Sunday, we set out to follow our road, descending the pass to the plain. I sent four horsemen and three or four foot soldiers to reconnoitre the country, and, on our march descending the pass, I ordered the horsemen to go ahead and after them the archers and musketeers, and thus the rest of the people in their order; because, however unprepared we might take the enemy, we were certain they would come to attack us on the road, having some trap or other device prepared to injure us. As the four horsemen and the four foot soldiers were advancing, they found the road obstructed by trees and branches cut and thrown over it, with many large, thick pines and cypresses, which seemed to have been but just cut down; and, thinking the road further on might not be so much obstructed, they continued ahead, but the further they proceeded the more obstructed by pines and cypresses they found it. The whole pass was well wooded, and had many dense shrubs, so they marched with much difficulty; and, seeing the road in that condition, they became much alarmed, fearing that behind each tree the enemy lurked. On account of the thick woods, the horses could be little used, and the further they proceeded the greater became their alarm.

When they had already gone some distance in this manner, one of the four horsemen said to the others, "Brothers, let us go no farther. If you agree, it would be better to return, and inform the captain of the obstacles we have found, and of the danger in which we are, as we cannot make any use of the horses; but if not, let us go ahead inasmuch as I have offered my life till death, as well as all of you, for accomplishing this march." The others replied that this counsel was very good, but it did not appear to them wise to return to me until they had seen the enemy or ascertained how far the road went.

So they set out again, and, when they saw that it continued a long way, they halted, and sent one of the soldiers to tell me what they had seen.

When I came up with the vanguard and the horsemen, we pushed ahead on that bad road, recommending ourselves to God; and I sent to order those of the rear-guard to hurry up and not be alarmed, as we would soon reach level ground. When I joined the four horsemen, we advanced in spite of many obstacles and difficulties. After marching half a league, it pleased God we should come down to level ground, where I halted to await the people. These I told, when they arrived, that all should give thanks to Our Lord, Who had brought us safely thus far, whence we could first behold all the provinces of Mexico and Temixtitan which are on the lakes and in their neighbourhood. Although we were glad at beholding them, we felt some sorrow, remembering the losses we had sustained, and we all vowed never to quit the country without victory, even if we died there. With this determination, we all advanced as merrily as if it were a pleasure party. The enemy having already observed us, instantly made many and great smoke signals all over the country, so I again exhorted and cautioned the Spaniards that they should behave as they had always done and as was expected of them, and that no one should stray aside but all should march in good order close together. Already the Indians began to yell at us from some hamlets and small towns, calling on the entire land for the people to assemble and attack us at some bridges and difficult places near by there. We made such haste, however, that we were already down in the plain before they could collect; and, marching thus, we met certain squadrons of Indians on the road in front of us, and I ordered fifteen horsemen to break through them, which they did without any loss to ourselves, killing some of them with their lances. We followed on



PLAN OF MEXICO CITY

From *The Conquest of Mexico*, by Diaz del Castillo. Translated by Maurice Keatinge

our road towards the city of Tesaico [Texcoco], which is one of the greatest and finest to be found in all these parts, and, as the people on foot were somewhat tired, and it was getting late, we slept in a town called Coatepeque (which we found deserted) which is subject to the city of Tesaico and three leagues distant from it.

That night we bore in mind that, as this city and its provinces, called Aculuacan, is very great, and contains many people, possibly more than a hundred and fifty thousand men were ready at the time to attack us, so I, with ten of the horsemen, took the watch and guard of the first quarter, and ordered the people to be well on the alert. The next day, which was Monday, the last of December, we followed our road in the usual order, and at a quarter of a league from the town of Coatepeque, while we were all advancing amidst perplexity, discussing with each other as to whether the Tesaicans would be hostile or friendly, rather believing that it would be the former, four principal Indians met us on the road bearing a banner of gold on a pole,[1] which weighed about four marks of gold, giving us to understand by this sign that they came peaceably; God only knows how much we desired peace, and how much we stood in need of it, being as we were so few and so cut off from help in the midst of the forces of our enemies. When I saw the four Indians, one of whom was known to me, I halted our people and met them. After we had greeted one another, they said they came on the part of the chief of that city and province, who is called Guanacacin.[2] They be-

[1] This was the usual flag of truce. It was in the form of a square of netting. Cortes, with Israelitish rapidity, calculated its money value at four *marks*, and Bernal Diaz was equally quick at estimating it to be worth eighty *dollars:* eight ounces went the mark.

[2] Coanacochtzin succeeded his brother Cacamatzin who was strangled by order of Cortes on the Sorrowful Night. He had long aspired to his brother's crown, and, with his younger brother Ixtlilxochitl, shared in the betrayal of Cacamatzin when he was seized in

sought me, on his part, to do no injury to his country nor to permit any to be done; because the people of Temixtitan were to blame for the past injuries I had sustained and not they, and they wished to be Your Majesty's vassals and my friends, as they would always preserve our friendship; and they invited us to enter the city, where by their deeds, we should recognise their sincerity. I answered, after welcoming them through the interpreters, that I rejoiced in their peace and friendship, and that, though they excused themselves for the war waged on me in the city of Temixtitan, they also well knew that in certain of their subject towns, five or six leagues from the city of Tesaico, they had killed five horsemen, forty-five of my foot-soldiers, and more than three hundred Indians of Tascaltecal, and had taken much silver, gold, and other things from them; also that, inasmuch as they could not excuse themselves from this fault, the penalty would be the restoration of our property; and that on this condition,—although they well deserved death for having killed so many Christians,—I would make peace with them, since they offered it to me, but otherwise I would have to treat them with the utmost severity. They answered that the lord and chief of Temixtitan had taken all those things, but they would search for what they could, and return it to me. They asked me if I would come that day to the city, or would lodge in one of the two towns similar to suburbs, called Coatinchan and Guaxuta,[1] which extend unbrokenly for about a league and a half from it. The latter, as it transpired afterwards, was what they wished. I told them that I would not stop until I reached the city of

his palace at Texcoco and carried by boat to Mexico. Ixtlilxochitl had already met Cortes on the road from Tlascala to Tlepehuacan, bearing likewise his flag of truce, and offering his friendship and alliance.

[1] Coatlinchan and Huexothla. From Chiantla and Texcoco the villages and haciendas extended in an unbroken succession to Coatepec.

Tesaico; and they said we would be welcome and they would go ahead and prepare quarters for the Spaniards and myself. On reaching these two towns, some of their chiefs came out to meet us and bring us food.

About noon, we reached the body of the city where they had prepared our quarters in a very large house, which had belonged to the father of Guanacacin, lord of the said city. Before we entered our quarters, I assembled our people, and proclaimed by the public crier that no one under penalty of death should leave the quarters without my permission. The building was so large that double the number of Spaniards could have lodged comfortably in it. I did this so that the natives of the city might be reassured and return to their homes, because it seemed to me that we did not see a tenth part of the people usually found in the city, nor any women and children; which was an alarming sign. On the day we entered the city, which was New Year's Eve, I disposed our quarters, and, still somewhat disquieted on account of the few people, and seeing these so uneasy, the thought struck us that they refrained from showing themselves and going about the city on account of fear, which somewhat quieted our apprehensions. Towards evening, certain Spaniards mounted some lofty terraces, from whence they could observe the whole town, and they saw that all the natives were abandoning it, some putting their effects in canoes (which they call *acales*) on the lake, and others going up into the hills. Although I immediately ordered their departure to be stopped, it was already so late that night overtook us, and, as they used such great haste, it was useless. Thus the chief of the city, whom I longed, as for my salvation, to have in my hands, escaped with many of the other chiefs to the city of Temixtitan, which by the lake is six leagues from there, taking away all their possessions. For this

Cortes Arrives at Texcoco

reason, and to save what they wanted, those messengers had come to see me as I have said above, so as to delay me somewhat, that upon entering the city I might do them no harm; and that night they thus abandoned not only us but also their city.

Three days thus elapsed in this city without any encounter with the Indians, for they neither dared to attack us, nor were we disposed to go out far searching for them, as my final intention was, that if ever they should wish to come seeking peace, to receive them, and to always require this of them. At this time the lords of Coatinchan, Guaxuta, and Autengo,[1] which are three of their large towns, and are, as I have said, incorporated and joined to the said city, came, weeping, to ask me to pardon them for having absented themselves from their country, saying that they had never fought with me, at least not of their own free will, and promising hereafter and henceforth to do all that I might command them in the name of Your Majesty.[2] I told them, through the interpreters, that they had already known the good treatment I had always shown them, and that, in leaving their country and the rest, they had done wrong; but, inasmuch as they promised to be our friends, they must inhabit their homes, and bring back their wives and children, and I would treat them according to their deeds. They went back, as it seemed to us, not very well content.

When the lord of Mexico and Temixtitan, and all the other lords of Culua (when this name of Culua is used it must be understood as meaning all the country and provinces of these parts subject to Temixtitan), knew that the lords of these provinces had offered themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, they sent them certain messengers to tell them that they had behaved very

1 Now called Tenango Tepopula.

2 These people came begging forgiveness for their part in the former hostilities and offering assistance; thus one by one, the adjacent cities and tribes abandoned the capital to its fate.

badly; and that, if they had done it from fear, they should realise that the Culuans were many, and had sufficient power to kill me and all the Spaniards and all the Indians of Tascaltecal, which indeed they would very soon accomplish; but that, if they had done it to save their lands, they should abandon them and come to Temixtitan, where they would receive larger and greater towns for their residence. The chiefs of Coatinchan and Guaxuta bound these messengers, and brought them to me; and they immediately confessed that they had come from the lords of Temixtitan, but that it had been to ask those chiefs to act as mediators, since they were my friends, in making peace between them and myself. But the men of Guaxuta and Coatinchan denied this saying, and added that the people of Mexico and Temixtitan desired nothing but war. Although I believed they spoke the truth, nevertheless, as I wished to entice the people of the great city into friendship with us, because on them depended peace or war with the other provinces which had revolted, I ordered those messengers to be liberated, and told them to have no fears, for I would send them again to Temixtitan. I prayed them to tell those lords that, although I had reason to do so, I did not want war with them, but rather to be friends as we had been before; and in order to assure them still more and to win them over to the service of Your Majesty, I sent them word that I well knew that the principal persons who had led them into the past war were already dead; that the past was the past, and that they ought not to provoke the destruction of their lands and cities, as I would be much distressed by it. With this I set the messengers free, and they went away, promising to bring me the answer. The lords of Coatinchan and Guaxuta and I remained better friends on account of this good action than before, and I pardoned them their past errors and thus they left well satisfied.

Destruction of Iztapalapan

Having been seven or eight days in the city of Tesaico without hostilities or any encounter, fortifying our quarters, and ordering everything necessary for our defence, and for attacking the enemy, and, seeing they did not attack me, I sallied out from the city with two hundred Spaniards, amongst whom were eighteen horsemen, thirty archers, ten musketeers, and three or four thousand friendly Indians. I followed the shore of the lake till we reached the city called Iztapalapa, which is two leagues by water from the great city of Temixtitan, and six from Tesaico; it contains about ten thousand households, and half, or even two-thirds, of it is built on the lake. Its lord, Montezuma's brother, whom the Indians, after the latter's death, had selected as sovereign, was the leading one in making war on us, and expelling us from the city. For this reason, as well as because I had learned that the people of Iztapalapa were very badly disposed towards us, I determined to march against them. When their people perceived me, about two leagues before arriving there, some warriors immediately appeared on land, and others in canoes on the lake; thus we advanced over those two leagues, skirmishing, both with those on land and with those on water, till we reached the said city. Almost two-thirds of a league outside the town, they had opened a causeway, which was like a dyke between the fresh and salt-water lakes, as Your Majesty may see from the map of the city of Temixtitan I have sent. When the dyke was opened the water of the salt lake began to rush with great impetus into that of the fresh-water lake, although the two lakes are more than half a league apart; while we, not noticing the trap in our eagerness for victory, passed all right and continued our approach, until we entered, mixed up with the enemy, into the city. As they were already warned of our approach, all the houses on land

were deserted, and all the people took refuge with their property in the houses on the lake, and those who fled also retreated to them, fighting us very stoutly. But Our Lord was pleased to so strengthen His own that we pursued them until we drove them into the water, sometimes breast high, and at other times swimming; and we captured many of the houses in the water. More than six thousand souls, men, women, and children of the inhabitants, perished, for our Indian allies, seeing the victory which God gave us, had the sole idea to kill right and left.

As night came on, I collected my people, and set fire to some of the houses; and, while they were burning, it seemed that Our Lord inspired me, and recalled to my mind the dyke I had seen on the road, and I figured to myself what a great danger it was. I determined to leave the city, it being already far into the night and quite dark. When I reached the water, which may have been about nine o'clock at night, it was so deep, and flowed with such impetus, that we passed it running full tilt, but some of our friendly Indians were drowned, and all the plunder that had been taken in the city was lost. I assure Your Majesty that, if we had not passed the water that night, or had waited three hours more, none of us would have escaped, because we should have been surrounded by water, without having an outlet anywhere. When day broke, we saw that the water of the one lake had filled that of the other and was running no more, and that all the salt lake was covered with canoes filled with warriors, expecting to take us there. I returned that day to Tesaico, fighting sometimes with those on the lake, though we could do them little harm, as they would immediately retreat in their canoes.

On arriving at Tesaico, I found the people I had left there all safe, and without having had any encounter;

and they were very glad at our coming and our victory. The day after we arrived a Spaniard, who had been wounded, died, and he was the first white man the Indians had killed in this campaign. The next day, certain messengers, from the city of Otumba and four other cities near to it, which are four or five leagues from Tesaico, arrived in this city. They came to beg me to pardon them for any fault of theirs in the past war, because all the power of Mexico and Temixtitan gathered in Otumba when we retreated routed, believing they could finish us. The people of Otumba saw plainly that they could not clear themselves from blame, although they excused themselves, saying they had been commanded; but, to incline me the more towards leniency, they told me that the lords of Temixtitan had sent other messengers, asking them to adhere to their party and not to conclude any friendship with us, otherwise they would fall upon them and destroy them. They declared, however, that they would rather be vassals of Your Majesty, and obey my commands. I answered that they knew very well how blameworthy they were for what had happened, and, to secure my pardon and belief in their professions, they would first have to bring me, as prisoners, those messengers of whom they spoke, and all the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan who remained in their country; and that I would not otherwise pardon them; and that they should return to their homes with their people, and then prove by their deeds that they were good vassals of Your Majesty. Although we exchanged many other arguments, they were unable to get anything else out of me, and returned to their country assuring me they would always do what I wished, and from henceforward they have always been, and are, loyal and obedient in Your Majesty's service.

In the other account, Very Fortunate and Most Excellent Prince, I told Your Majesty that, when they

routed and expelled me from the city of Temixtitan, I took with me the son and two daughters of Montezuma, the lord of Tesaico, Cacamacin, his two brothers, and many other chiefs whom I held prisoners, and that all of them had been killed by the enemy (although they belonged to their own nation and some of them were their chiefs), except two brothers of Cacamacin, who by a happy chance were able to escape. When I reached the province of Tascaltecal, one of these two brothers, called Ipacsuchil,[1] otherwise called Cucascacin, whom I had already, in the name of Your Majesty and with the approval of Montezuma, appointed lord of the city of Tesaico and the province of Aculuacan, escaped, and returned to the city of Tesaico, where they had elected for chief another of his brothers called Guanacacin,[2] whom I have above mentioned. It is said that he had Cucascacin, his brother, killed in the following manner: On his arrival in Tesaico, the guards seized him and informed Guanacacin their lord, who communicated the news to the lord of Temixtitan. As soon as the latter heard that the said Cucascacin had come back, he could not believe he had escaped from us, but suspected he must have gone there in our interest to furnish us some information; so he immediately sent order to Guanacacin to kill Cucascacin, his brother. Guanacacin obeyed without delay. The younger of the brothers still remained with me, and being quite a lad, our conversation made more impression upon him, and he became a Christian, taking the name of Don Fernando.[3] When

Succession to the Throne of Texcoco

[1] Cortes misses this name entirely; which is not to be wondered at. as the boy was called Ahuaxpitcatzin.

[2] Meaning Coanacochtzin.

[3] He is described, by the historian Ixtlilxochitl, as being as white as a Spaniard, tall, graceful, and of genial manners. He spoke Castilian fluently, and almost every evening after supper he spent much time in discussion with Cortes, who became very fond of him.

I left the province of Tascaltecal for Mexico and Temixtitan, I left him there with certain Spaniards, and I shall relate hereafter to Your Majesty what afterwards happened there.

The day after my return from Iztapalapa to the city of Tesaico, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval,[1] aguacil mayor of Your Majesty, in command of twenty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, musketeers, archers, and shield bearers, for two very necessary objects: first, to escort out of this province certain messengers I was sending to the city of Tascaltecal to learn in what state the thirteen brigantines, which were being made there, were, and for some other necessary things, as well for the people of Vera Cruz, as for my own company; and second, to make sure of that region, so that the Spaniards might come and go in safety; for at that time we could neither go out of the province of Aculuacan without passing through the enemy's country, nor could the Spaniards in Vera Cruz and other parts, come to us without much danger from the adversary. I ordered the aguacil mayor, after having conducted the messengers safely, to go to a province called Calco,[2] bordering on this of Aculuacan; for I had proofs that the natives of that province, although belonging to the league of Culua, wished to become vassals of Your Majesty but did not

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This lad was placed on the throne of Texcoco, and Antonio de Villareal and Pedro Sanchez Farfan had charge of his education, while Prince Ixtlilxochitl, who had also been baptised under the name of Fernando, had command of Texcocan military operations.

[1] Already mentioned as alguacil mayor of Vera Cruz; he was a fellow townsman of Cortes from Medellin and one of the bravest and most competent captains in Mexico, being also extremely popular with his men, and always faithful to his commander. In temperament, he was a happy contrast to Pedro de Alvarado. His death at an early age, which took place in 1528 at Palos, was a great grief to Cortes, who attended him in his last hours.

[2] Chalco was tributary to Mexico but under a ruler of its own.

dare, on account of a certain garrison the Culuans had placed near them.

The said captain left, taking with him all the Indians of Tascaltecal who had carried our baggage, and others who had come with us and had obtained some plunder in the war. The latter marched some distance ahead, as the Captain believed that, if the Spaniards brought up the rear, the enemy would not dare to attack them; but the adversaries in the lake towns and along the coast, as soon as they saw them, attacked the rear of the Tascaltecans and captured, plundered, and even killed some of them. When the captain arrived with the horsemen and foot soldiers, he attacked them vigorously with lances, and killed many; those who escaped retreated to the water and the other towns near by. The Indians of Tascaltecal went back to their country with what remained to them, accompanied by the messengers I had sent. All these being placed in safety, Gonzalo de Sandoval continued his road to the province of Calco, which was very near at hand. Early next morning a large number of the enemy came out to attack him, and, both having formed on the field, our men opened the attack; the horsemen routed two squadrons in such wise that the others quickly abandoned the field, and our forces burned and killed amongst them.

Sandoval's Expedition to Chalco

This being accomplished, and that road cleared, the people of Calco came out to receive the Spaniards, all rejoicing together greatly. The chiefs said they wished to come and speak with me, so they left and came to sleep at Tesaico, where some of them appeared before me with two of the sons of the lord of Calco. They gave me about three hundred dollars of gold in pieces and told me how their father had died, and that, at the time of his death, he had told them that the greatest grief he took with him was not to see me before he died, for he had been

expecting me a long time; and he had commanded them to come and see me as soon as I should come to this province, and to look upon me as their father. As soon as they had known of my coming to the city of Tesaico, they said that they had wished to come immediately to see me, but, out of fear of the Culuans, they had not dared; nor would they now have dared to come had the captain whom I had sent not arrived in their country; they added that, when they returned to it, I must give them many other Spaniards to conduct them in safety. They also told me that I well knew that never, either in war or otherwise, had they been against me, and that I also well knew that, when the Culuans were attacking our quarters in Temixtitan and the Spaniards whom I had left there while I went to meet Narvaez in Cempoal, there were two Spaniards in their country in charge of certain maize which I had sent them to collect; they had escorted these men to the province of Guaxocingo, for they knew that the people there were our friends, so that the Culuans might not kill them as they did all who were outside the quarters in Temixtitan. They told me this and other things, weeping, and I thanked them very much for their good disposition and deeds, promising them that I would always do everything they desired and that they should be well treated. Thus far they have always shown very good will, and have proved very obedient to all that is commanded them on the part of Your Majesty.

These sons of the lord of Calco and those who came with them told me one day that, as they wished to return to their country, they besought me to give them people who would conduct them in safety. Gonzalo de Sandoval, with certain horsemen and foot soldiers, escorted them, with orders after he had left them in their country, to go to the province of Tascaltecal and bring back with him certain Spaniards who were there, and Don Fernando, the brother of Cacamacin, whom I have mentioned

before. Four or five days later the aguacil mayor returned with the Spaniards, bringing with him the said Don Fernando. A few days afterwards, I learned that, as he was a brother of the lords of this city, the sovereignty belonged to him, although there existed other brothers. For this reason, and because the province was without a ruler, inasmuch as his brother Guanacacin, the lord of it, had deserted it and gone to Temixtitan, and also because Don Fernando was a very good friend of the Christians, I, in Your Majesty's name, caused him to be acknowledged as ruler. The inhabitants of this city, although at that time there were very few left in it, elected him, and thenceforward obeyed him; many others who were absent, or who had fled, began to return to the city and province of Aculuacan, and they obeyed and served the said Don Fernando; and thenceforward the city began to be rebuilt and well populated.

Two days after this was done, the lords of Coatinchan and Guaxuta came, and told me they had positive information that all the power of Culua would come against me and the Spaniards, for the whole country was full of foes; and that they could not decide whether they should bring their wives and children where I was or if they should take them to the mountains; for they were very much afraid. I told them not to be at all afraid, but to stay in their homes without making any change, adding that I desired nothing so much as to meet the Culuans on the battle field. I advised them to be prepared, and to place their watchmen and scouts over all the country, and, as soon as they saw or learned that the adversaries were advancing, to let me know. So they went away well admonished as to what I had commanded them. That night I prepared all our force, and placed many watchmen and scouts everywhere that was needful; and we never slept the whole night nor thought of anything but this. Thus we were expecting them during

the whole night, believing what the chiefs of Guaxuta and Coatinchan had told us.

The next day, I learned that some of the enemy were moving about the borders of the lake, hoping to surprise and capture some of the Tascaltecans who were coming and going for the camp service. I also learned that they had confederated with two towns, subject to Tesaico, which are near the water, in order to do us all the mischief they could; and that they had fortified themselves, and prepared barricades, ditches, and other works necessary for their defence. Upon learning this, I took next day twelve horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers and two small field pieces, and went to the place where they were, about a league and a half from the city. On the way, I met certain of the enemy's spies and others who were advancing, so we charged them, capturing and killing some of them, and those who were left escaped to the water; we set fire to a part of those towns and returned to our quarters victorious and much pleased. The next day three chiefs of those towns came to ask pardon for what had passed, beseeching us not to destroy them, and promising me not to receive those of Temixtitan any more in their town. As they were persons of no importance, and vassals of Don Fernando, I pardoned them in Your Majesty's name.

The next day, there came to me certain of those Indians, with broken and bruised heads, telling me that the men of Mexico and Temixtitan had returned to their town, but, not meeting with the reception to which they were accustomed, had ill-treated the inhabitants and taken some of them prisoners, and that, if no defence had been offered, they would have captured everything. They prayed me to be on the alert, in case those of Temixtitan returned, so as to give them help; and with this they departed to their town.

The people whom I had left making the brigantines

in the province of Tascaltecal were informed that a ship had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, in which had come thirty or forty Spaniards (besides the sailors), eight horses, cross-bows, muskets, and powder. As they did not know how we were progressing with the war, and had no sure way to reach us, they were anxious; and some of the Spaniards were waiting there, for they did not dare to come on, although they desired to bring me such good news. When one of my servants, whom I had left there, learned that some of them wished to try to reach me, he proclaimed, by the public crier, serious penalties for anyone who should leave there until I had sent orders to do so. But one of my lads, realising that nothing in the world would give me so much pleasure as to know of the arrival of that ship and the help it had brought, left by night, although the country was not safe, and came to Tesaico, where we were greatly amazed to see him arrive alive. We were very glad of the news, as we were in extreme need of relief.

Reinforcements Arrive at Vera Cruz

The same day, Most Catholic Lord, certain good messengers from Calco arrived here in Tesaico, and told me that, on account of their having come to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, Mexico and Temixtitan were about to attack and destroy them, and were therefore assembled, and had prepared all their neighbours; hence they besought me to help and aid them in such great necessity, for, if I did not do so, they would find themselves in the greatest straits. I assure Your Majesty, as I wrote in my former account, that next to our own hardships and privations, the greatest uneasiness I felt was caused by not being able to aid and favour the friendly Indians who were molested and harassed by the Culuans for being vassals of Your Majesty. I and my companions would always go to the extent of our possibilities in this, as it seemed to us that in nothing could we further the

service of Your Cæsarean Majesty more than in favouring and aiding Your vassals. In the emergency in which these Calcans appealed to me, I was unable to do for them what I wished, and I told them I could not, as at this season I had wished to send for the brigantines and had prepared, for this purpose, all the people of the province of Tascaltecal, from whence they had to be brought in pieces, and I was obliged to send horsemen and foot soldiers for them. I told them, however, that as they already knew that the natives of Guajocingo, Churultecal, and Guacachula, were all vassals of Your Majesty and our friends, they should go to them and pray them in my name to give them aid and succour, as they lived very near to their country, and to obtain from them a garrison with whom they might be safe till I could aid them. For the present, I said, I was unable to give them any other assistance.

Although they were not as well satisfied as if I had given them some Spaniards, they thanked me, and begged me to give them a letter of mine to ensure greater success; because between the people of Calco and those two provinces owing to their being of different parties, there had always existed some differences. While occupied in making these arrangements, certain messengers unexpectedly arrived from the said provinces of Guajocingo and Guacachula, who, in the Calcans' presence, told how the chiefs of those provinces had not seen or heard of me since I left the province of Tascaltecal, but, nevertheless, had always kept their watchmen on the hills and mountains which border their country and overlook Mexico and Temixtitan, in order that, if they saw many smokes, which are the signals of war, they might come to help me with their vassals and people; and, as they had recently seen more smoke than ever, they had come to know how I was and if I needed anything, so as to send me some warriors. I thanked them very much, and

told them that, by Our Lord's blessing, the Spaniards and myself were well and had always been victorious over the enemy, and that, besides greatly rejoicing in their good will and presence, I rejoiced still more to form an alliance of friendship between them and the Calcans who were present; and I prayed them, as they were both vassals of Your Majesty, to become good friends and help one another against the Culuans who were wicked and perverse, especially now when the Calcans were in need of aid as the Culuans intended to attack them. Thus they became very good friends and confederates, and, after remaining there two days with me, both departed very happy and satisfied, and rendered one another mutual service.

Relics of the Murdered Spaniards

Three days later, when we knew that the brigantines had been completed and the people who were to bring them were ready, I sent Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor with fifteen horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers to escort them to me. I gave orders to destroy and raze a large town, subject to this of Tesaico, which borders on the confines of the province of Tascaltecal, because its natives had killed five horsemen and forty-five foot soldiers who were coming from Vera Cruz to Temixtitan when I was besieged there, ignorant at the time that such a great treachery had been practised against us. When we entered Tesaico this time, we found in their places of worship or mosques of the city the skins of five horses with their hoofs and shoes, as well tanned as they could have been in any part of the world. They had offered these to their idols in token of victory, together with much wearing apparel and other things belonging to the Spaniards. We found the blood of our brothers and companions spilled and sacrificed all about these towers and mosques, a thing which filled us with grief, for all our past tribulations were thus revived. The traitors of that

and the other neighbouring towns had placed themselves in ambush on each side of a difficult pass in order to make sure of those Christians when they were descending a slope on foot, leading their horses behind so that they were unable to use them, and to execute upon them the greatest cruelty that has ever been done; for they took them in the midst killing some, while others, whom they captured alive, they brought to Tesaico and sacrificed, tearing out their hearts before the idols. That it happened thus, is proved by the fact that, when the alguacil mayor passed there, certain Spaniards who had accompanied him, found in a house of a village which is between Tesaico and the place where they captured and killed the Christians, a white wall on which the following words were written in charcoal: "Here the unhappy Juan Yuste was kept a prisoner.[1] A thing fit without doubt to break the heart of those who saw it. He was a gentleman, one of the five horsemen. When the alguacil mayor arrived at that town, the natives, conscious of their great guilt, fled, and the horsemen and Spanish foot soldiers and the friendly Indians pursued and killed many and captured many women and children who were declared slaves. However, moved by compassion, he did not kill and destroy all whom he might have, and before he left there he even collected those who survived and restored them to their town, so it is now populated again and repentant of the past.

The alguacil mayor proceeded five or six leagues towards that town of Tascaltecal which is nearest to the borders of Culua, and there he met the Spaniards

[1] Juan Yuste came originally with Panfilo de Narvaez, passing later into service under Cortes. He started with five horsemen and twenty-five foot to bring some gold from Vera Cruz, and at Tlascala he was joined by three hundred natives. Ignorant of the events which had followed upon Alvarado's massacre in Mexico, he and his party proceeded with entire confidence, and were surprised with the consequences Cortes describes.

and the people who were to bring the brigantines. The day after he arrived they left there with the planks and cross timbers, all of which were carried in the most perfect order by eight thousand men; a marvellous sight to see, and it seems to me even to hear of, the bringing of thirteen small ships overland a distance of about eighteen leagues. I assure Your Majesty that from the vanguard to the rear was a distance of two leagues. When they set out, they took eight horsemen and a hundred Spaniards with the van, and more than ten thousand warriors on the flanks, having as captains Yutecad and Teutipil,[1] two chiefs amongst the nobles of the city of Tascaltecal. In the rear-guard, came another hundred odd Spaniards and eight horsemen, and another ten thousand warriors well armed, who had for captain, Chichimecatecle, one of the principal lords of that Province; there were also other captains the latter had brought with him. When they started out, Chichimecatecle escorted the van with the planking, and the other two captains brought up the rear with the joinings; but when they entered the country of Culua the masters of the brigantines ordered the joinings to be taken ahead and the plankings to remain behind; as the latter would cause the most hindrance should any disturbance happen, which would most likely occur in the front. Chichimecatecle, who brought the planking, and until now had led his warriors at the head of the vanguard, took this as an affront, and there was some trouble in pacifying him and making him remain in the rear-guard, because he wished to meet any danger that might present itself. When finally he did agree to this, he nevertheless did not want any Spaniards in the rear-guard, because he was a very brave man and wished to have the honours himself. These captains also brought two thousand Indians carrying provisions.

Transport of the Brigantines

[1] Aiutecatl and Teutepil.

In this order and agreement, they marched three days, and, on the fourth, they entered this city with much rejoicing and noise of kettle-drums when I went out to receive them. As I said above, the people were so spread out that from the entrance of the first until the last had arrived we spent six hours without the line of people being once broken.[1] After they had arrived, and I had thanked the chiefs for the good service they had done us, we assigned them their quarters and provided for them the best we could. They told me they wished to meet the Culuans and that I should see when I commanded it that they and their people were desirous of

[1] History hardly records a greater *tour de force* than the construction, transport, and launching of these brigantines: the glory of the conception belongs to Cortes, but the merit of its execution was due to the Tlascalans. Martin Lopez, a ship-carpenter, was in charge of the work, assisted by a few other Spaniards, but the brunt of the work and the cost were borne by the Tlascalans.

Prescott recalls two instances of similar undertakings but on a smaller scale with less distance to cover: the first was during the siege of Taranto by Hannibal, and the second at the same place, seventeen centuries later under Gonsalvo de Cordoba. Balboa also built four small boats on the isthmus of Darien, two of which he succeeded in carrying to the coast and launching successfully. For magnitude of the undertaking, distance of transport, number of men engaged, with no beasts of burden to help them, and the importance of the issue at stake, the achievement of Cortes and the Tlascalans stands alone. The arrival of the convoy at Texcoco was rightly made the occasion of a triumphal entry, to the sound of music and salutes, while the crowds enthusiastically cheered for Castile and Tlascala. It was found necessary to build a canal in which to join the parts of the brigantines together, and from which to launch them safely on the waters of the lake. In the *Voyage de Thomas Gage*, the author, who travelled in Mexico in 1626, says that, as the tallow and oil required in the ship building were very scarce in Texcoco, they were obtained from the dead bodies of the Indians slain in the daily skirmishes. As the fat of dead Indians was found useful for dressing wounds, there is no reason why it should not do equally well as ship's tallow. Cortes had previously built two brigantines on the lake, bringing the cordage, sails, and iron, from the dismantled ships in Vera Cruz, just to show Montezuma what the "water houses" were like, but he had also counted on using them in case of need; they had, however, been destroyed during the fighting with Alvarado, while Cortes was absent.

avenging themselves or dying with us; I told them to rest and that very soon I would give them plenty to do.

When those warriors of Tascaltecal, who were certainly for hereabouts very dashing men, had rested in Tesaico three or four days, I prepared twenty-five horsemen, three hundred foot soldiers, five hundred archers and musketeers, and six small field pieces, and, without telling anyone where we were going, I left the city at nine o'clock in the morning. With me were the captains already named, with more than thirty thousand in their divisions, well organised after their fashion. When it was getting late, we met a body of the enemy's warriors four leagues from the city, and our horsemen broke through them and scattered them and, as the warriors of Tascaltecal were very fleet, they followed, and we killed many of our adversaries; and that night we slept in the field, keeping strict watch.

The next morning, we continued our march, and still I had not given out where I intended to go, because I distrusted some of the people of Tesiaco who were with us, for as yet I had no confidence in them, fearing that they might give information to the people of Mexico and Temixtitan of what I intended to do. We arrived at a town called Xaltoca,[1] which is situated in the midst of the lake, and we found around it many trenches full of water and, as these surrounded the town, it was very strong because the horsemen could not enter. Our adversaries yelled a great deal, discharging darts and arrows at us, but the foot soldiers entered, although with some difficulty, and expelled them, and burnt a great part of the town. That night, we slept a league from there, and as day broke we continued our march, meeting the enemy who yelled at us from afar, as they are accustomed to do in war, a thing which is certainly

[1] Xatlocan: a place near Zumpango surrounded by a lake of the same name: it was a dependency of Texcoco.

frightful to hear, and, pursuing them, we reached a great and beautiful city, called Guaticlan;[1] finding it deserted, we lodged in it that night.

Cortes Advances to Tacuba

The next day, we advanced to another city, called Tenainca,[2] where we encountered no resistance, and without halting we went on to another, called Acapuzalco,[3] both of which are on the borders of the lake; but neither did we stop there as I wished very much to reach another city near by, called Tacuba, which is very near to Temixtitan. When we were close to it, we found that there also they had made many trenches filled with water, and that the enemy was on the lookout. As soon as we saw them, we and our friends attacked them briskly, and entered the city, killing some and expelling the other inhabitants from it. As it was already late then, we did nothing else that night, but lodged in a house which was so large that we easily had room for everybody.

At daybreak, our friendly Indians began to pillage and set fire to the whole city except our quarters, and they put such diligence into it that a fourth part was burnt. This was done because, when we were routed the other time in Temixtitan and passed through this city, its inhabitants joined those of Temixtitan and fought us cruelly, killing many Spaniards.

Of the six days we remained in the city of Tacuba, none passed on which we had not some encounters and skirmishes with the enemy. The captains of the Tascaltecans, and some of their men, exchanged many challenges with those of Temixtitan, and they would fight most beautifully one with the other; and many arguments passed between them, with mutual threats and insults,

[1] Cuauhtitlan, three leagues from Mexico.

[2] Tenayucan.

[3] Atzcapotzalco, barely one league from Mexico; called the town of Silversmiths as it was famous for its metal work.

which was undoubtedly a sight to see. During all this time, many of the Indians were killed, without any of our people being injured, though we often entered by the causeways and bridges of the city, where they had so many defences that they resisted us stoutly. Frequently they would pretend to give us a chance to enter, saying: "Come in and enjoy yourselves," and at other times they would say: "Do you think there is now another Montezuma, so that you can do as you please?" Once, while these speeches were passing, I placed myself, they being on the other side, near one of the bridges they had taken away, and signalled to our people to remain quiet; and they also, when they saw that I wished to speak to them, silenced their people. I then asked them, why they were so foolish as to court destruction? and, if there was amongst them any principal chief, to call him because I wished to speak to him. They answered that the whole multitude of warriors I saw there were chiefs so that I might say whatever I wished. As I did not make answer, they began to insult me. Someone of our men, I do not know who, then called to them that they would die of hunger, for we would not allow them to come out to seek for food; they retorted that they needed none, and that when they did they would eat us and the Tascaltecans. One of them took some loaves of maize bread and threw them towards us saying: "Take it and eat it if you are hungry for we are not"; and immediately they began to yell and attack us.

As my coming to this city of Tacuba had been principally in order to speak with those of Temixtitan, and to learn their intention, and as my being there profited nothing, I decided, at the end of six days, to return to Tesaica and hasten the construction of the brigantines, so as to surround the enemy by water and land. The day we left, we slept in the city of Goatitan, which I have mentioned above, nor did the enemy ever cease pursuing

us, though the horsemen would turn against them from time to time, and thus some fell into our hands.

The next day, we set out, and, as our adversaries saw we were leaving, they thought it was from fear, and a great number gathered and began to pursue us. When I saw this, I ordered the foot soldiers to go ahead without stopping, and five horsemen to accompany them, as their rear-guard, while I remained with twenty others. Six of these I ordered to place themselves in ambush in one place, six in another, and five in another, while I, with three more, went to another place; and it was arranged that when the enemy had passed, believing that we were all marching ahead, as soon as they should hear me cry, "Señor Santiago!" they should rush out and attack from behind. When the time came, we appeared, and fell upon them with our spears, and the pursuit lasted in most beautiful style for about two leagues over a plain as smooth as the palms of our hands. Thus many perished at our hands and at those of the friendly Indians; and the others dropped behind and pursued us no further, while we marched on and overtook our people. That night we slept in a charming town called Aculman, two leagues from Tesaico, for which we left the next day, entering it at noon, and being very well received by the alguacil mayor whom I had left in command, and by all the people, who rejoiced at our coming; especially so because, since the day we left, they had never heard anything of us or of what had happened to us, and they had been anxious for news of us. The day after we arrived, the chiefs and captains of Tascaltecal, asking my permission, left for their country very well satisfied to receive a share of the spoils.

Two days after my return to Tesaico, certain Indian messengers came from the lords of Calco, and told me that they had been commanded to let me know, on their part, that the people of Mexico and Temixtitan were com-

ing to destroy them, and asked me, as they had on other occasions, to send them some help. I immediately arranged to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, with twenty horsemen and three hundred foot soldiers, whom I charged to make all haste and on arriving to give all the favour and help possible to those vassals of Your Majesty, our friends When he reached Calco, he found awaiting him a great many people, assembled, not only from that province, but also from Guajocingo and Guacachula; after ordering what was to be done, he left, taking his march towards a town called Guastepeque,[1] where the Culuans were in garrison and from which place they did harm to the Calcans. At a town on the road, many of our foes appeared, but our friends were many and had besides the advantage of the Spaniards and horsemen; and all united and charged upon them and drove them from the field, pursuing them with great slaughter. They rested for the night in that town before Guastepeque and the next day they left. Just as they were about to reach the town of Guastepeque, the Culuans began to attack the Spaniards, who in a short time routed them, forcing them with great loss out of the town. The horsemen then dismounted in order to feed their horses and rest themselves. While thus off their guard, the enemy fell upon the square of the quarters, screaming and yelling most fiercely, discharging many stones and darts and arrows. The Spaniards took to their arms, and they and our friends rushed out against them and expelled them again, pursuing them for more than a league, and killing many. Very tired, they returned that night to Guastepeque where they rested for two days.

Sandoval's Victories in the Province of Chalco

About this time the alguacil mayor learned that many hostile warriors had assembled in a town called Aca-

[1] Huaxtepec.

pichtla,[1] so he determined to go thither and see if they would surrender peaceably upon his demand. This town was very strongly situated upon a hill where it could not be attacked by the horsemen. When the Spaniards arrived, the inhabitants, without waiting for anything, began to attack them, throwing stones on them from the heights; and, although many of our friends accompanied the alguacil mayor, they dared not attack the town, seeing its strength, nor engage their adversaries. The alguacil mayor, on seeing this, determined to take the heights of the town by assault or die, and, with the cry of "Señor Santiago!"[2] they began the ascent; and God was pleased to give them such valour that, in spite of the resistance it offered, they took it, but at the cost of many wounded. When the Indians, our friends, followed them, and the enemy recognised their defeat, there was such a slaughter by our people and a throwing of the foe from the heights, that those who were present affirmed that a small river near the town was so dyed with blood that for more than an hour they could not drink, although on account of the heat they were very much in

[1] Ayachapichtla; Sandoval was not disposed to attack because of his own extreme weariness, and the exhausted condition of his men and horses, but the captain Luis Marin counselled him on no account to withdraw, as upon the Chalcans, who were watching only to see which side was the stronger in order to give their alliance to the victor, the moral effect would be bad.

[2] Santiago (St. James) was the patron Saint of Spain, and from the times of the Moorish wars his name had been their battle cry. Bernal Diaz naively relates that this battle was fought and won by the Indians of Tlascala and Chalco, the Spaniards being more interested in capturing Indian women and collecting booty than in slaying the enemy, adding also that the cruelties of the Indians were so shocking that the Spaniards tried to save the enemy from their own allies. Bernal Diaz attacks Gomara's account of the stream being red with blood, and says that, while some wounded Mexicans did make their way down to the water, in seeking to escape, and it may have been discoloured for the length of time required to say an "Ave Maria," it is untrue that anyone suffered from thirst on that account, as the town possessed several fountains of the finest water.

want of water. Having concluded this, and leaving the two towns in peace, though well chastised for their refusal at the beginning, the alguacil mayor returned to Tesaico with all his people, and Your Catholic Majesty may believe that this was a most signal victory, where the Spaniards showed very remarkable valour.

When the people of Mexico and Temixtitan learned that the Spaniards and Calcans had done them such damage, they determined to send certain captains with a large force against them.[1] As soon as the Calcans learned this, they sent to beseech me to send them some aid with all haste, and I again promptly sent the alguacil mayor, with foot soldiers and horsemen; but when he arrived the Culuans and the Calcans had already met in the field and both had fought very stoutly. God was pleased, however, that the Calcans should triumph, and they killed many of their adversaries, and captured some

[1] Bernal Diaz relates that Quauhtemotzin was so enraged when he heard of the defection of the Chalcans and of the hostilities against him, in which they had taken part with the Spaniards, that he despatched a force of twenty thousand warriors against them, which was transported across the lake in two thousand canoes. Sandoval had barely got back to Texcoco and had not even had time to make his report to the commander, when an express arrived from Chalco with the news that things were in a worse state than ever. Cortes, hastily assuming that Sandoval had returned too soon, leaving his mission only half accomplished, fell into a rage, and ordered Sandoval's instant return to Chalco, without hearing a word of what he had to say in explanation. Sandoval was so much hurt at this injustice that on his second return to Texcoco bringing the prisoners, he would have nothing to say to Cortes in spite of the latter's apologies and protests. The two men did afterwards make up this quarrel, and became as good friends as ever. There was also much grumbling over the partition of the slaves; first His Majesty's fifth was deducted, then the fifth belonging to Cortes, then the officers took their shares, so that by the time it came to allotting any to the soldiers there was not much of any value left. Bernal Diaz says that those who were in favour with Cortes, bought their slaves privately and had them branded, paying the price to him: many slaves also escaped or disappeared, but the soldiers were credited with their value, which was charged against them in the division of the spoils.

forty of them, amongst whom was a Mexican captain and two other chiefs whom the Calcans delivered to the alguacil mayor to be brought to me. He sent me some of them and others he kept because, for the greater security of the Calcans he, with all the people, remained in one of their towns on the frontier of Mexico. Later, when there seemed to him no further need for his remaining, he returned to Tesaico and brought with him the other prisoners who had remained in his hands. Meanwhile we had many other encounters and skirmishes with the natives of Culua, which to avoid prolixity I do not specify.

Reinforcements Arrive at Vera Cruz

As the road between Vera Cruz and this city of Tesaico was safe for travelling to and fro, the people of that city had news of us every day and we of them, which before was not possible. They sent me by a messenger some crossbows and muskets and powder which pleased us greatly; and two days after, they sent me another messenger by whom they made known that three ships[1] had arrived at the port bringing many people and horses, whom they would immediately send on to me,—aid which God miraculously sent us in proportion to our need.

I have always sought, Most Powerful Lord, to win the people of Temixtitan to our friendship by every way and means I could; on the one hand because I did not wish them to provoke their own destruction, and on the other in order to rest from the hardships of all the past wars; but principally because I knew it would conduce to Your Majesty's service. Whenever I could lay hold of anyone from the city, I would send him back to it, admonishing and requiring the inhabitants to come to terms of peace.

[1] Bernal Diaz speaks of but one ship, on board which came Julian de Alderete, royal treasurer; also Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, a Franciscan, of whom further mention will be made, and many others. The welcome news was brought that Juan de Fonseca, the Bishop of Burgos, was out of favour with the Emperor.

On Holy Wednesday, which was the twenty-seventh of March of the year 1521, I had brought before me those chiefs of Temixtitan who had been taken by the Calcans. I asked if any of them would go to the city and speak on my part to the lords of it, and ask them to stop fighting and give themselves as vassals of Your Majesty as they had before done; for I did not wish to destroy them but to be their friends. Although they took it badly, fearing they would be killed for bringing that message, two of the prisoners determined to go, and asked me for a letter, for, though they did not understand what was in it, they knew that amongst us it was customary, and that by taking it the people of the city would give them credence. I explained also through the interpreters what I wrote in the letter, which was what I had told them. So they left, and I ordered five horsemen to accompany them till they were in safety.

On Holy Saturday, the Calcans and some of their allies and friends sent to tell me that the Mexicans were marching against them, and they showed me on a large white cloth a drawing of all the towns which were to march, and the roads by which they were coming; and they besought me at all costs to send them help. I answered them that within four or five days I would send it, but if meanwhile they found themselves in straits they should let me know and I would aid them. On the third day of the Feast of the Resurrection, they came back to beg me to send help as quickly as possible as the enemy was advancing steadily. I told them I would and announced that for the following Friday twenty-five horsemen and three hundred foot-soldiers should be ready.

The Thursday before, certain messengers came to Tesaico from the provinces of Tazapan, Mascalcingo, and Nautan,[1] and from other cities in their neighbourhood, telling me that they came to give themselves as

[1] Tozopan, Mexicalzingo, and Nautlan.

vassals of Your Majesty and to be our friends, as they had never killed any Spaniards nor rebelled against Your Majesty's service. They brought me certain pieces of cotton cloth for which I thanked them, and promised them that if they were good, they would receive good treatment; so they went away very well content.

The Friday following, which was the fifth of April of the said year 1521, I left this city of Tesaico, with the thirty horsemen and three hundred footmen who had been equipped, leaving in it twenty other horsemen and three hundred footmen under the command of Gonzalo de Sandoval, the alguacil mayor. More than twenty thousand men of Tesaico went with me, and we marched in good order and slept in a town in Calco, called Talmanalco,[1] where we were well received and quartered. Since the Calcans became our friends, they have kept a strong fort and garrison there, for it is on the Culuan frontier. We arrived at Calco the next day at nine o'clock but did not stop, except to tell the chiefs of my intention to make a tour round the lakes, as I believed that after accomplishing this march, which was important, the thirteen brigantines would be found complete and ready to be launched. After speaking to the Calcans, I left at vespers that day, and reached one of their towns where more than forty thousand friendly warriors joined us, and there we slept that night. As the natives of the town told me that the Culuans were expecting me in the field, I ordered that at a quarter before daybreak everybody should be on foot and ready.

Cortes Takes the Field

After hearing mass, we began our march, I taking the vanguard with twenty horsemen, and leaving ten for the rear-guard; and in this order we crossed some very steep sierras. At two o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at a very steep hillock on the top of which there were

[1] Tlamanalco: a little more than one league from Chalco.

many women and children, while its slopes were covered with warriors who at once began yelling loudly, sending up smoke signals, discharging their slings, and throwing stones and darts, so that in approaching them we sustained much injury. Although we saw they did not dare to wait for us on the field, it appeared to me that, even though our road led us elsewhere, it was cowardly to go on without giving them a lesson, lest also our friends should suspect we did it out of cowardice; and I began, therefore, to reconnoitre about the hillock. It was about a league in circumference and certainly was so strong that it seemed madness to assail it; but although I might have laid siege to it and obliged them to give themselves up from sheer want, I could not spare the time to do this. Being thus perplexed, I determined to assault its slopes at the places I had examined, and gave orders to Cristobal Corral, lieutenant of sixty foot soldiers whom I had always in my company, to attack them with his infantry and ascend its steepest sides with certain musketeers and archers to follow him; and to Rodriguez de Villafuerte and to Francisco Verdugo that they with their men and certain archers and musketeers should mount on another side; and to the captains Pedro Dircio and Andres de Monjaraz to assault it from another side with some few archers and musketeers; and that upon hearing a musket-shot all should resolve to mount, winning either victory or death.

Immediately on the discharge of the musket, they began the ascent, and won two slopes of the hillock from the adversaries, but were unable to get any higher because, such were the steepness and ruggedness of the rock that they could not sustain themselves neither with feet nor hands. The Indians with their hands hurled many rocks from above, and these in rolling broke into pieces which scattered, doing infinite damage; and the attack of our enemies was so fierce that they killed two Span-

iards and wounded more than twenty, stopping our advance. Seeing that it was impossible to do more, and that such great numbers of foes were gathering to help those on the hillock that the country was covered with them, I ordered the captains to retreat; and, having descended, the horsemen charged those on the plain and drove them from the field, killing them with their lances during a pursuit which lasted for an hour and a half.

The people being many, the horsemen scattered from one part to another, and after having again assembled some told me that about a league further on they had seen another hillock with many people on it, but that it was not so strong; that on the plains near it were many people; and that there were to be found there two things which we did not find on this other, one was water and the other less strength in the position, so we might without danger capture the people. Although I much regretted not having obtained the victory, we left and slept that night near the other hillock, where we endured much hardship and privation; neither did we find any water, nor all that day had we or the horses drunk any; thus we passed that night hearing a great noise of kettle-drums, trumpets, and yells from our enemies.

As soon as day dawned, certain captains and myself began to examine the hill, which seemed to us almost as strong as the other; but it had two high points on its summit which were easier to mount and which were defended by many warriors. My captains and I with other *hidalgos* who were there took our shields and went on foot towards it (for the horses had been taken to be watered about a league off), only for the purpose of seeing its strength and where it might be attacked; when the people saw us, although we said nothing to them, they followed us. When we reached the foot of the hillock, the men on the peaks, believing I intended to attack those in the centre, abandoned their positions to

come to their help. Seeing this blunder, and that by taking the peaks they would be at a great disadvantage, I very quietly ordered a captain to mount quickly with his people and capture the steepest points which they had abandoned; and he succeeded. I, with the rest of my force, began to mount the hillock where most of the enemy was gathered; and it pleased God that I should capture the slope and that we should reach a height almost equal to that whence they fought, which result had appeared almost impossible without infinite danger. One of the captains had already planted his banner on the highest point, and from there he began to discharge muskets and cross-bows at the enemy, and they, seeing the injury they sustained, and that the battle was lost, made signs of surrender, laying down their arms. As my policy is always to convince these people that I do not wish to injure them, no matter how blameworthy they may be, especially when they are willing to become vassals of Your Majesty; and as they are intelligent and understand this very well, I ordered the fighting to cease, and when they came to speak to me I received them very well. Observing how well they were treated, they made this known to those on the other hillock, who although they were victorious, decided to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty, and came to me asking pardon for the past.

I remained two days in this town near the hill, from where I sent the wounded to Tesaico. Starting again, I arrived at ten o'clock in the morning at Guastepeque, which I have already mentioned, where we lodged in the chief's house, situated in the most refreshing gardens ever seen. These gardens have a circuit of two leagues, and in their midst flows a very beautiful rivulet, and at intervals of two cross-bow shots are kiosks and very gay flower beds, and an infinite number of different fruit trees, many herbs, and fragrant flowers; certainly

it is an admirable thing to see the charm and grandeur of this place. We reposed that day here, where the natives provided us all the pleasure and service they could. The next day we left, and at eight o'clock in the morning we arrived at a great town called Yautepeque, where many hostile warriors were awaiting us. When we first arrived, it seemed that they wanted to make us some sign of peace, either out of fear or to deceive us, but immediately afterward, without any further cause, they fled, abandoning their town. As I did not care to delay there, I pursued them with my thirty horsemen for about two leagues till I got them to another town called Gilutepeque,[1] where we killed many of them. We found the people in this town off their guard, because we got there ahead of their scouts, so some were killed, and many women and children were taken, and the rest fled. I remained there two days, believing the chief would give himself as vassal to Your Majesty, but as he never came I ordered fire to be set to the town when I departed. Before I left it, there came certain persons of the former town, called Yautepeque, praying me to pardon them and offering to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty. I received them willingly because they had already been well chastised.

Capture of Cuernavaca

On the same day I left, I came at nine o'clock in the morning within sight of a well-fortified town, called Coadnabaced,[2] within which was a large force of warriors. The town was so strong, and surrounded by so many hills and ravines some sixty feet in depth, that no horseman could enter it

[1] Xiuhtepec.

[2] Cuauhnahuac: the present Cuernavaca. This town, the ancient capital of the Tlahuica tribes, situated on an isolated sort of promontory at an elevation of over five thousand feet, and surrounded, save on one side, by a narrow but profound cañon which was impassable, was defended by a strong garrison under Coatzin, its lord. The feat of the Tlascalan, to which Cortes does scanty justice, was

except by two ways, which were then unknown to us; and even to reach them we would have been obliged to make a circuit of about a league and a half. An entrance also could be effected by wooden bridges had they not removed them. The place was so secure and protected, that even had we been ten times as many they could have held it notwithstanding. Upon our approach, they discharged many darts, arrows, and stones at us; but while they were skirmishing with us in this manner, an Indian of Tascaltecal crossed unobserved by a very dangerous pass, and when the enemy suddenly saw him they believed the Spaniards were entering the same way, and thus in a panic they fled with the Indian behind them. Three or four lads, servants of mine, and two from another company, when they saw the Indian cross, followed him, and also reached the other side. I led the horsemen along the sierra to find an

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indeed remarkable, and is described by Bernal Diaz, who claims also to have followed on the heels of the intrepid warrior. Two immense trees growing on opposite sides of the ravine, inclined towards one another until their branches met; seeing this the bold Tlascalan conceived the plan of crossing by this aërial bridge, and, with an agility worthy of his conception, he safely passed on the swaying boughs over the dizzy height, and slid down the tree trunk on the other side, while the garrison of Cuernavaca were fighting elsewhere, and unobservant of his achievement. About thirty Spaniards and a number of Tlascalans followed his example, three of whom lost their balance and fell into the stream below. Bernal Diaz says that it was a frightful undertaking, and that he himself became quite blind and giddy from the great height and danger. Indeed it was no small thing for a man, weighted with arms and armour, to essay such a feat, and if the credit of the invention belongs to the Tlascalan, we cannot withhold our admiration from the thirty Spaniards who had the hardihood to follow him.

Cuernavaca is the present capital of the State of Morelos, and is one of the most beautiful and interesting towns in Mexico, while its situation is hardly excelled in picturesqueness and grandeur by any other in the world. The palace, which Cortes afterwards built there, still stands, and a charming villa, with luxuriant gardens overhanging the great *barranca* which was built by a Spaniard, Laborda, in the XVIIIth century, became a favourite resort of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian during his brief and luckless reign.

entrance to the town, while the enemy incessantly discharged darts and arrows at us; for between them and us there was only a narrow ravine. While they were occupied in fighting with us, they had not seen the five Spaniards, so our men took them suddenly from behind, stabbing and slashing at them, taking them completely by surprise, for they did not know that their own people had abandoned the pass by which the Spaniards and the Indians had crossed; so they became so frightened that they lost courage to fight, and the Spaniards killed them, till, perceiving how they had been tricked, they began to fly. Our foot soldiers were already in the town, and began to set fire to it while the enemy abandoned it; and thus escaping the latter reached the sierra although many of them perished, for the horsemen pursued and killed many.

After we discovered how to enter the town, which was about mid-day, we lodged ourselves in some houses in a garden, though we found the place almost all burnt. It was quite late when the chief and other notables, seeing they could not defend themselves in spite of their strong town, and fearing we might pursue and kill them in the hilly ground, decided to come and offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty; I received them as such, and they promised that henceforth they would always be our friends. These Indians and the others who came to give themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, after we had burnt and destroyed their houses and property, told us that the reason they were so tardy in seeking our friendship was because they thought that they would make good their fault by first allowing us to injure them, believing that this done we would not afterwards be so angry with them. We slept that night in the town, and the next morning marched through deserted and waterless pine forests, passing through a defile, suffering much from fatigue and want of water, so that some Indians who

accompanied us perished from thirst. We stopped that night at some farms, seven leagues from the town.

At daybreak we resumed our march and came in sight of a large city, called Suchimilco,[1] which is built on the fresh-water lake. As the Indians were notified of our coming, they had digged many ditches and canals and removed the bridges at all the entrances to the town, which is three or four leagues from Temixtitan. Within, there were many brave-looking people determined to defend themselves to the death. As soon as we arrived there and had collected all our people, disposing them in good order and discipline, I dismounted and advanced with certain foot soldiers towards a ditch which had been made, and on the other side of which were infinite warriors. When the fighting began at the ditch, the archers and musketeers did them much damage, so they abandoned it and the Spaniards threw themselves into the water and passed over to dry land. After half an hour's fighting, we captured the greater part of the city, and the defenders retired in their canoes on the waterways. They fought until nightfall, when some of them sued for peace, but others continued fighting; and so many times did they make overtures without fulfilling them, that finally we discovered they did this from two motives, first that they might carry off their property while we were discussing peace, and secondly to gain time until help should reach them from Mexico and Temixtitan. They killed two Spaniards who had got separated from the others to plunder and found themselves in their extremity beyond reach of assistance.

In the evening, the enemy was debating how to manage that we should not escape alive from their city, and a great number decided to attack us where we had entered; on seeing them advance so rapidly we were surprised

[1] The name Xochimilco signifies "field of flowers": the town was situated on the left bank of the lake of the same name.

to observe their strategy and agility. Six horsemen and myself, who were readier than the others charged amongst them and frightened by the horses they fled, we following them through the city, killing many, though we found ourselves in a great conflict because they were so daring that many of them ventured to face the horsemen with their swords and shields. While we were pell-mell amongst them and in a great confusion, the horse I rode fell through sheer fatigue, and as some of the adversaries saw me on foot they rushed upon me. While I defended myself against them with my lance, an Indian of Tascaltecal,[1] when he saw me in danger, rushed to help

Narrow Escape of Cortes

[1] Cortes searched in vain for this Indian who saved his life, but, as he could never be found dead or alive, he finally declared that he was persuaded that it was not an Indian but his holy patron St. Peter who had rescued him. Clavigero pertinently notes that, in this battle as in many others, the Indians might easily have killed Cortes had they not determined to take him alive and sacrifice him. Bernal Diaz attributes the rescue of Cortes to a Castilian soldier, Cristobal de Olea, who led a body of Tlascalans to his relief, but makes no mention of any one particular Tlascalan. Cortes may, however, be supposed to know better, and he refers to Olea as "a servant of mine who helped raise the horse." Olea received three frightful wounds from the deadly *maquahuitl*, a weapon which the Mexicans wielded with great address.

The fighting in and around Xochimilco lasted from the 15th of April until the morning of Friday the 20th, when the Spaniards arrived in Tlacopan (Tacuba), and, though Cortes says little about the events of those days, his men suffered considerably. While a small division was engaged in pillaging some storehouses near Xochimilco, the Mexicans attacked them; wounding a number and taking Juan de Lara, Alonso Hernandez, and two other soldiers of Andres de Monjaraz's company prisoners. These men were carried in triumph to Temixtitan where, after being questioned by Quauhtemotzin, they were sacrificed and their arms and legs taken to be exhibited in the neighbouring provinces as a forecast of the fate awaiting the remainder of the white men (Bernal Diaz, cap. cxlv.).

Cortes wished to leave behind the spoils taken at Xochimilco rather than be cumbered with them, but yielded to the clamours of his men, who declared they were able to defend what they had taken. The arrival in Tlacopan was marked, as Cortes relates, by the capture of two more Spaniards, Francisco Martin Vendabal and Pedro Gallego,

me, and he and a servant of mine who joined him helped me to raise the horse. In the midst of this, the Spaniards came up, and the enemy all deserted the field, and I with the other horsemen returned to the city, for we were very weary. Although it was almost night and time for rest, I commanded that all the raised bridges over the water should be filled up with stones and adobes, so that the horses could go and come from the city without obstacle; nor did I leave there till all those difficult crossings had been repaired. We passed that night using great vigilance and giving close attention to the watches.

The next day, all the natives of Mexico and Temixtitan who already knew we were in Suchimilco planned an attack with great force by water and land, so as to surround us; for they believed we could not again escape

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and the commander, on this occasion, made a rare display of feeling which led to the composition of a romance or ballad, long in popular vogue—

"En Tacuba esta Cortes
Con su escuadron esforzado,
Triste estaba y muy penoso,
Triste y con gran cuidado,
La una mano en la mejilla
Y la otra en el costado," etc.

Standing on a lofty teocalli, a group of the leaders, including Julian de Alderete and Fray Pedro Melgarejo, surveyed the country, with the great capital floating on the waters of its lake, and one Alonzo Perez, noting the pensive sadness of the commander's mien, begged him not to feel dejected, for losses and destruction were incident to warfare, but that of him it could never be said that like Nero he had watched the burning city, quoting the couplet—

"Mira Nero de Tarpeya
A Roma come de ardia."

Cortes answered, calling him to witness how often he had begged the Mexicans to make peace and save themselves, adding that his sadness was not for any one cause alone, but from thinking of all the hardships still to be endured in reconquering the city, which with God's help they must now undertake.

from their hands. I mounted one of the towers of their idols to see how they would approach and where they would attack us, that I might give all necessary orders. After I had completed our preparations, there appeared on the water a large fleet of canoes which I believe exceeded two thousand; and in them there came more than twelve thousand warriors, in addition to whom there arrived such a multitude of people by land that they covered the whole country. Their captains came at their head, carrying our captured swords in their hands, and naming their provinces, crying, "*Mexico! Mexico! Temixtitan! Temixtitan!*" and shouting insults at us, and threatening to kill us with the swords they had taken from us before in the city of Temixtitan. After I had settled where each captain was to be placed, and as on the mainland there was a great multitude of the enemy, I advanced to attack them with twenty horsemen, and five hundred men of Tascaltecal divided into three companies. I ordered them, as soon as they had scattered the enemy, to collect at the foot of a hill about a half a league from there, where many of the foe had also assembled. When we separated, each division pursued the enemy on its respective side, and, after having routed them and killed many with our swords, we retired to the foot of the hill; there I ordered certain foot soldiers, my servants, who had served me and were very agile, to try to mount the steepest part of the hill. I with the horsemen would then circle round behind, where it was more level, and we would take them in the middle. Thus it happened that, when the enemy saw the Spaniards climbing the hill, they turned, believing they could retreat at their ease, but instead they encountered us, who were about fifteen horsemen; and we fell upon them, as did likewise the warriors of Tascaltecal, so that in a very short time more than five hundred of them perished, and all the others escaped and fled towards the mountains.

Six other horsemen planned to go up a very broad and level road, using their lances on the enemy. Half a league from Suchimilco they came upon a squadron of very dashing troops coming to help their countrymen, and routed them, killing some with their lances. When all the horsemen had assembled, we returned about ten o'clock to Suchimilco, finding at the entrance many Spaniards awaiting our return to know what had happened to us; and they told me they had been in great straits and had done their utmost to drive out the enemy, of whom a great number had perished. They gave me two of our swords they had retaken from them, and told me that the bowmen were out of arrows and could get no more. While hearing this, before we dismounted, a great body of the enemy appeared on a very broad causeway, yelling wildly, and promptly we fell upon them, driving them into the water which bordered the causeway on each side; thus we routed them, and, collecting our people, we returned very tired to the city, which I burned entirely except for the part where we lodged. Thus we stopped in the city three days, incessantly fighting, and finally we left having burnt and razed it to the ground. Certainly it was a sight worth beholding, as it had many towers of their idols built of stone and mortar; but, in order not to enlarge, I do not specify many other notable things concerning the city.

The day I left, I went out to a square, which is on the mainland adjoining the city, where the natives held their markets, and I gave orders to ten horsemen to go ahead, and to another ten to march in the middle with the foot soldiers, while I took another ten in the rear; and when the people of Suchimilco saw us leaving, believing it was from fear of them, they attacked our rear, setting up fierce yells. Thereupon the ten horsemen and I returned and fell on them, pursuing them till we drove them into the water; after which they did not

bother us any more, and we continued our march. At ten o'clock in the morning we arrived in the city of Cuyoacan two leagues from Suchimilco, as well as from the cities of Temixtitan, Culuacan, Uchilubuzco,[1] Iztapalapa, Cuitaguaca, and Mizqueque, all of which are situated on the water, the furthest being about a league and a half distant. We found it deserted, and lodged in the house of the chief, where we remained two days.

Since I was to lay siege to the great city of Temixtitan as soon as the brigantines were finished, I wished first to see the port of the city and the entrances and exits, and where the Spaniards might attack or be attacked. The day after we arrived, therefore, I took five horsemen and two hundred foot soldiers and went, by a causeway leading into the city of Temixtitan, to the lake which was very near, where we saw an infinite number of canoes on the water with countless warriors in them. We reached a barricade they had erected across the causeway, and the foot soldiers began to attack it; although it was very strong and a stout resistance was offered and ten Spaniards were wounded, we finally won it, killing many of the enemy, although the archers and musketeers exhausted their arrows and powder. From this place, we saw how the causeway led directly through the water until it entered the city of Temixtitan, a full league and a half distant, and that likewise on the other, which goes to Iztapalapa, there were crowds of innumerable people. When I had considered all that it was necessary to observe, for it was likely that a garrison of horsemen and foot soldiers would have to be established here in this city, I ordered our people to retire, and we returned to the town, burning their houses and the towers of their idols.

[1] Huitzilopocho is the present Cherubusco. Cuitaquaca was Cuitlahuac and is now called Tlahua; the last town mentioned should be Mixquic.

Return March to Texcoco

We departed next day from this city to go to Tacuba, which is two leagues from here, where we arrived at nine o'clock in the morning, using our lances in one place and another along the way, for the enemy came from off the lake to attack and jeer at the Indians who carried our baggage; finding themselves worsted, however, they let us proceed in peace. I have already said that my principal purpose was to make a circuit of all the lakes, in order to reconnoitre and inspect the country better, and also to give help to our friends, hence I did not care to stop in Tacuba. The people of Temixtitan, who were so near there that the city extends almost to the mainland of Tacuba, seeing that we went on, recovered much confidence and with great daring attacked the centre of our baggage-train; but as the horsemen were well stationed and the ground was all level thereabouts, we had great advantage over them, without risking any danger ourselves. As we were galloping from one side to the other, two of the several youths, my servants, who usually followed me, did not do so, but chanced to go aside where they were captured by the enemy, who, we believe, put them to a very cruel death, as was their custom. God knows how grieved I was by it, both because they were Christians, and also because they were brave men who had served Your Majesty well in this war. After leaving this city, we continued our march through other neighbouring towns, and rejoined our people, where I learned how the Indians had captured those youths. To avenge their death, and because the enemy followed us with the greatest insolence in the world, I, with twenty horsemen, concealed myself behind some houses, and, as the Indians saw the other ten with the people and baggage going ahead, they followed them fearlessly by another very broad and level road; thus, when we saw that they had passed somewhat, I shouted in the name of the Apostle

Santiago and we fell upon them furiously. Before they could reach the canals near there, we killed more than a hundred splendid chiefs; after which they did not care to follow us any further. This day we slept two leagues beyond, in the city of Coatinchan, tired out and wet, as it had rained a great deal that afternoon; and we found it deserted. We set out the next day, using our lances from time to time on some Indians who came to yell at us, and we slept at a town, called Gilotepeque,[1] finding it also deserted. The next day, we went at twelve o'clock to a city, called Aculman,[1] belonging to the lordship of the city of Tesaico, where we slept that night and were well received by the Spaniards, who rejoiced at our coming as if it were their salvation; because after I had left them they had heard nothing of me till the day we arrived. They had suffered various alarms in the city, and the inhabitants had been daily saying to them that the men of Mexico and Temixtitan would fall on them while I was absent. Thus, with God's help, this expedition was concluded, and it was a very great enterprise in which Your Majesty received great service, for many reasons, as I shall hereafter state.

Events in Chinantla

When I came for the first time to the city of Temixtitan, Very Powerful and Invincible Lord, I ordered, as I made known to Your Majesty in my other relation, that certain plantations should be established for Your Majesty in two or three of the most desirable provinces. I sent two Spaniards to one of them, called Chinantla,[3] which is not subject to the Culuans; in the others, which were, the Culuans killed those who were at the plantations when they made

[1] Citlatlepoc.

[2] Acolman, where Cortes first learned that reinforcements had arrived from Vera Cruz.

[3] Chinantla: the lance heads of black obsidian which are frequently mentioned were chiefly manufactured here, and were called by the same name. Chinantla now forms part of the state of Oaxaca.

war on me in Temixtitan, and took everything they had, which was a very considerable sum according to the estimates of this country. During almost a year I could learn nothing about the Spaniards who settled in Chinantla, nor, while all those provinces were in revolt, could they hear any thing from us. The natives of Chinantla, being vassals of Your Majesty and enemies of the Culuans, told those Christians that the Culuans had made fierce war upon us, and, as they believed few or none of us had come out alive, they would not allow the Spaniards to leave the country; and thus these two stayed there. One of them, who was a youth and a soldier, they made their captain, and at this time he went out with them to fight their enemies, over whom he and they were victorious most of the time. When it pleased God they should afterwards return, and reorganise, and obtain some victories over the enemy who had routed and expelled us from Temixtitan, the people of Chinantla told those Christians that they knew there were Spaniards in the province of Tepeaca, and that, if they wished to learn the truth, they would risk sending two Indians who, although they had to pass through much hostile country, could travel at night and off the highway till they reached Tepeaca. The better man of the two Spaniards sent a letter by those two Indians, the tenor of which was as follows: "Noble Sirs, I have written Your Worships two or three letters, but I do not know if they have reached you or not as they have had no answer, so I doubt whether this will obtain one. I make it known to you, Sirs, that all the natives of this country of Culua are up in arms and have attacked us many times; but always (praise be to Our Lord for it) we have been victorious. We have also had daily war with the natives of Tuxtepeque, for they are allies of Culua. Those who have remained in the service of Their Highnesses as their vassals are seven towns of Tenez; and Nicolas and I

have always stopped in Chinantla, which is the capital. I would like very much to know where the captain is, in order to write to him and make known what has happened here. If perchance you can write me where he is, and will send twenty or thirty Spaniards, I would go thither with two of the chiefs from here who wish to see and speak with the captain. It would be well for them to come now because it is the harvest time for Cacao, and the Culuans hinder it by making war. May the Lord guard the noble persons of Your Worships, according to your desire. From Chinantla, I know not what date of the month of April, of the year 1521. At the service of Your Worships, Hernando de Barrientos."

When the two Indians arrived with this letter in the province of Tepeaca, the captain, whom I had left there with certain Spaniards, sent it immediately to me at Tesaico; and we all rejoiced greatly at receiving it, because, though we had always confided in the friendship of Chinantla, sometimes the thought occurred to us that they might confederate with Culua and kill the two Spaniards. I immediately wrote, giving them an account of what had happened, and telling them to have hope, for, although they were surrounded on every side by enemies, by God's pleasure, they would very soon find themselves free and able to come and go in safety.

Canal Built at Texcoco

After having made the circuit of the lakes, during which I gathered much important information for laying siege to Temixtitan by land and water, I stopped in Tesaico, strengthening myself as best I could with people and arms, hastening to get the brigantines finished and making a canal to take them to the lake; which canal was begun immediately after the planks and joinings of the brigantines had been brought, and extended from one side of our camp to the lake. From the place where the brigantines were being joined there was quite a half a league's

distance to the lake. More than eight thousand natives of Acolhuacan and Tesaico were employed daily for fifty days; for the channel of the canal was more than twelve feet deep and as many in width, all staked and walled. Thus, the water which flows through it would by its own force carry them to the lake, so that we could take the smaller vessels without danger, and with little labour to the water. It certainly was a very great work, worthy of admiration.

As soon as the brigantines were finished and put in the canal on the twenty-eighth of April[1] of the said year, I made a review of all my people and found eighty-six horsemen, a hundred and eighteen bowmen and musketeers, seven hundred and odd foot soldiers with swords and shields, three heavy iron guns, fifteen small bronze field pieces and ten cwt. of powder. Having finished the review, I charged and recommended all the Spaniards to obey and comply with the ordinances which I had made respecting the conduct of the war, and to be merry, and keep up their courage inasmuch as they saw how Our Lord was leading us to victory over our enemies; for they well knew that when we entered Tesaico we had brought only forty horsemen, but that God had helped us even more than we had thought, for a ship had arrived with horses, men, and arms, as they had seen; and I said principally that the fact that we were fighting to promote the spread of our faith and for the reduction to Your Majesty's service of so many revolted provinces, should fill them with courage and zeal to conquer or die. They all answered, demonstrating a willingness and desire for

[1] The feast fell upon Sunday April 28th, and was chosen for the launching of the brigantines. All the Spaniards received the sacraments; Fray Olmedo said Mass at an altar erected near the lake and blessed the boats. Amidst salvos of artillery, strains of music from the Christian and Indian bands, and the enthusiastic cries of "*Castilla! Tlascala!*" from the crowds, the brigantines glided gracefully into the lake. A solemn *Te Deum* closed the ceremony.

this; and we passed the day of the review in great rejoicing, longing to see ourselves already engaged in the siege and to bring this war to an end, on which the peace or further disturbance of these parts so much depended.

The next day, I sent messengers to the provinces of Tascaltecal, Guajucingo, and Churultecal, to let them know that the brigantines were ready, and that I and all my people were about to surround the great city of Temixtitan. Therefore I begged them, since they were notified by me and had already prepared their people, that as many of them as possible and as well armed as they could be, should set out and join me here in Tesaico, where I would wait ten days for them, and that they should by no means exceed that time, because it would disarrange everything that had been planned. When the messengers arrived, the people of those provinces were already prepared and eager to meet the Culuans: those from Guajucingo and Churultecal came to Calco as I had ordered, for the siege was to be begun near that place. The captains of Tascaltecal arrived in Tesaico with very brilliant and well-armed forces, five or six days before the Feast of the Holy Ghost, which was the time I had designated to them. When I learned that day of their approach, I went out to meet them with great rejoicing, and they came so gladly and so well disciplined that things could not have been better. According to the account the captains made, there were more than fifty thousand warriors, who were well received by us and given quarters.

Division of the Forces for the Siege

The second day after the Feast, I ordered all the foot soldiers and horsemen to assemble in the square of the city of Tesaico, that I might divide them and assign them to the captains, who were to lead them in three divisions to be stationed in three cities which are around Temixtitan. I made Pedro de Alvarado,[1] captain of one division, as-

[1] Pedro de Alvarado was one of four brothers all of whom fought

signing him thirty horsemen, eighteen archers and musketeers, and one hundred and fifty foot soldiers with swords and shields, and more than twenty-five thousand warriors of Tascaltecal; these were to make their headquarters in Tacuba. I made Cristobal de Olid, captain of another division, to whom I assigned thirty horsemen, eighteen archers and musketeers, and a hundred and sixty foot-soldiers with swords and shields, and more than twenty thousand warriors of our allies; these were to make their headquarters in Cuyoacan. Of the third division, I made Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, captain, assigning him twenty-four horsemen, four musketeers, fifteen archers, and a hundred and fifty foot soldiers with swords and shields, fifty of whom were chosen among those I had brought in my company, and

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under the command of Cortes; Jorge served afterwards in Guatemala, and died in Madrid in 1540; Gomez died in Peru, and Juan a bastard brother died at sea while going to Cuba to bring horses. Pedro was one of the most daring and cruel of the Spanish captains; two exploits gained him a conspicuous place in the annals of the conquest, the first being the massacre of the nobles during the religious dance in the great temple, which provoked such terrible consequences, and the second his renowned leap which still holds its place amongst the heroic feats of history under the name of *El Salto de Alvarado*, a street in Mexico near the spot of the alleged jump perpetuating the legend.

Bernal Diaz denies the fact, and bluntly explains that the story took its origin from a libellous refrain or *pasquinade* composed by a soldier who had a sharp faculty for such rhyming. This represented Alvarado as deserting his two hundred and fifty men during the retreat of the *Noche Triste*, saving himself by jumping his horse over a canal, and it passed, according to Diaz, into the common stock of camp stories and jokes. This desertion was one of the accusations presented in his trial (record published by D. José Ramirez, Mex. 1847) to which Alvarado answered that he had held his men together as long as he could, but that it was they who deserted him, leaving him wounded, with his horse killed, and that he escaped only by a soldier taking him up behind him on his horse in the fight; nothing is said about any "leap." Cortes likewise never mentions it. The legend will never die, for it is of those which please popular fancy and become enshrined in the historical folk-lore, which is imperishable.

After the conquest, he was made governor of Cuauhtemallan and Chiapa, but his restless spirit spurred him to other adventures, and

more than thirty thousand men of the people of Guajucingo, Churultecal, and Calco. This division was to go to the city of Iztapalapa for the purpose of destroying it, and afterwards to advance over a causeway in the lake, protected by the brigantines, in order to join with the garrison at Cuyoacan, so that after I entered the lake with the brigantines, the alguacil mayor might fix his headquarters wherever it seemed to him most convenient. For the thirteen brigantines with which I was to enter the lake, I left three hundred men, almost all of whom were sailors[1] and well drilled, so that in each brigantine were twenty-five Spaniards; and each small vessel had a captain, a pilot, and six archers and musketeers.

According to the foregoing order the captains, who were to command the forces in the cities of Tacuba and

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he fitted out an expedition in 1535, by royal licence, composed of some five or more ships, carrying fifteen hundred men, and the necessary horses and arms, bound for Peru, where he landed at Puerto Viejo, marching thence to Quito. His arrival was unwelcome to Pizarro and Diego Almargo, who solved the difficulty by buying out his armament for 100,000 *castellanos* said at the time to have been an enormous price. He returned to Mexico, and undertook other ventures to the Spice Islands and California, and was finally killed in 1541 by a kick from a horse. When dying, he was asked where he suffered, to which he replied "In my soul."

Alvarado was called *Tonatiuh* (the sun) by the natives, on account of his high colouring and red beard; he was handsome, physically strong and brave, a typical swashbuckler of his period, cruel to the Indians, faithless to his friends, of quick temper, poor judgment, and known as a confirmed liar. Bernal Diaz fought in Alvarado's division during the siege.

[1] Although a number of the men had been sailors or fishermen, and consequently knew something about handling boats, none of them wanted to act as rowers for the brigantines, and it was with difficulty that Cortes completed his crews. Many of the natives of Palos, Triana, and other sea-ports, whom he ordered to take the oars, even objected on the score of their gentle birth, but the commander enforced his orders in spite of all excuses and protests. Each brigantine displayed the royal standard as well as its own particular ensign (Bernal Diaz).

Cuyoacan, after receiving instructions as to what they were to do, left Tesaico on the tenth of May, and slept in a fine town, called Aculman, two and a half leagues from there. The same day, I learned that some dispute had arisen between the captains about the quarters, and, to settle this and re-establish peace, I immediately sent a person who reproved and pacified them.[1] On

[1] According to Bernal Diaz, who was in Alvarado's division, Olid had taken possession of all the available houses in Acolman for himself and his troops, marking the houses thus appropriated with green branches, so that when Alvarado's division reached the town there were no quarters for them. The soldiers of the two divisions almost fell to fighting, and the two commanders had challenged one another, but several of the cooler-headed officers interfered and restored a semblance of peace; but Alvarado and Olid were never afterwards friends. Cortes sent the Franciscan, Fray Pedro Melgarejo and Captain Luis Marin, as his peace-makers.

Another incident occurred at this time, which Cortes passes over in silence. This was the desertion of the Tlascalan general, Xicotencatl, who left the army, accompanied by a few followers, and returned to Tlascala. Various reasons are given for his action; Bernal Diaz attributes it to jealousy of Chichimecatl, and a perfidious plan to get possession of his lands while the latter was absent, fighting against Mexico. Herrera ascribes his desire to return home, to a love affair (lib. i., cap. xvii.). There had been a quarrel between a Spanish soldier and a Tlascalan chief, in which the latter was badly wounded; the matter was hushed up, so that Cortes should not hear it, as he was very strict in such matters; thus the soldier remained unpunished and as Xicotencatl was a relative of the wounded chief he left (Prescott, lib. vi., cap. iv.). Cortes first sent some Tlascalans to seek to induce him to return, and, this failing, he despatched some Spanish horsemen, with orders to arrest the general and bring him back. He simultaneously sent news of the affair to the Senate of Tlascala, informing the senators that amongst Spaniards, desertion was punishable by death. The versions of Xicotencatl's end do not agree. Herrera describes his death by hanging in public at Texcoco, while Bernal Diaz says he was executed where he was captured. Xicotencatl had always mistrusted the Spaniards, nor could the blandishments of Cortes nor the popular sentiment in Tlascala ever change his opinion. He was opposed to the alliance, and after fighting the Spaniards in the field, he continued to oppose them in the councils of his people. Cortes was aware of his sentiments and conscious of the bad effect such an example of desertion would have if left unpunished; hence it is likely he was glad to be rid of an ally on whose fidelity he could not count. Xicotencatl's

the morning of the next day, they left there, and passed the night in another town, called Gilotepeque, which they found deserted, as it was within the enemy's country. The next day, they continued their march according to their instructions, and slept in a city, called Guatitlan, which I have before mentioned to Your Majesty, and which they also found deserted. The same day they passed through two other cities and towns, where they likewise found no people. At the hour of vespers, they entered Tacuba, which they also found deserted, and made their quarters in the houses of the chief, which are very beautiful and large. Although it was already late the warriors of Tascaltecal made an inspection of the entrance of two causeways leading to the city of Temixtitan and fought bravely for two or three hours with the people of the city until night separated them, when they returned safely to Tacuba.

The next morning, the two captains agreed, as I had commanded them, to cut off the aqueducts which supplied Temixtitan with fresh water. One of them went with twenty horsemen and some archers and musketeers to the source of the water, about a quarter of a league from there, and broke the pipes, which were of wood and mortar and stone, fighting valiantly with those of the city who defended the spring by land and water. At last he routed them and accomplished his purpose, cutting off the fresh water from the city—a very politic stratagem. The same day, the captains repaired certain dangerous passes, bridges, and aqueducts, in the neighbourhood of the lake, so that the horsemen might the more easily gallop from one part to another. This delayed them three or four days, during which they had many skirmishes with those of the city, wherein some Spaniards were wounded, many of the enemy killed, and many bridges and dikes

act of desertion was indefensible, and its penalty by the code of Tlascala was death.

captured. There was much bandying of words, and many challenges between those of the city and the warriors of Tascaltecal, things very remarkable and worthy of notice.

The captain, Cristobal de Olid, departed with the people who were to be garrisoned in Cuyoacan, two leagues from Tacuba, and the captain, Pedro de Alvarado stayed with his people in garrison at Tacuba, where he had skirmishes daily with the Indians. The same day that Cristobal de Olid left for Cuyoacan, he and his men arrived at ten o'clock in the morning and lodged in the houses of its chief, finding the city deserted. The next morning, with about twenty horsemen, some archers, and some six or seven thousand warriors of Tascaltecal they went to take a look at the causeway leading to Temixtitan; and they found the enemy well prepared, the causeway broken up, and many barricades erected. They engaged the enemy, and the archers wounded and killed some of their number. This was repeated for six or seven days, on each of which there were many encounters and skirmishes. One night, at midnight, certain watchmen of the city gave their cry near our quarters and the Spanish watchman cried "To arms!" whereupon our men sallied forth, but none of the enemy were to be found, for the cry which had alarmed them had been given very far from headquarters. As our people were distributed in so many places, the garrisons longed, as for their salvation, for my arrival with the brigantines and they continued hopeful those few days until I arrived, as I shall hereafter relate. During those six days, they would meet from both headquarters daily as they were near each other, and the horsemen scoured the country killing many of the enemy with their lances and bringing into the headquarters from the mountains great quantities of maize, of which bread is made, the principal food of these parts, and much superior to that of the Islands.

In the preceding chapters, I stated that I remained in Tesaico with three hundred men and the thirteen brigantines. As soon as I knew the divisions were in the places assigned for their camps, I could embark and take a look at the city and do some damage to the canoes. Although I very much wished to go by land, to give directions in the camps, the captains were persons who could be trusted with what they had in hand, while the affair of the brigantines was a matter of great importance, requiring stern discipline and attention, so I determined to embark in them, because we calculated to have the greatest risk and adventure by water. The principal persons of my company, however, *required* me in due form to go with the garrisons, as they believed that they were to undertake the most dangerous part. The day after the Feast of Corpus Christi, Friday, at dawn, I ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, to go with his people directly to the city of Iztapalapa, about six short leagues from there; shortly after mid-day they arrived there, and began to burn it, and to fight with its people, who, when they saw the great force of the alguacil mayor, for more than thirty-five or forty thousand of our allies had gone with him, retreated to their canoes. The alguacil mayor, with all the people accompanying him, lodged in that town, and remained there that day awaiting my orders and what might happen to me.

Cortes Takes Command of the Brigantines

Immediately after I had despatched the alguacil mayor, I embarked in the brigantines, and we started with sails and oars; and while the alguacil mayor was fighting and burning the city of Iztapalapa, we came in sight of a very large and strong hill[1] near that city, all surrounded

[1] Called Tepepolco: extensive quarries of the red porous stone *Tetzontli*, used for building purposes, were found here, and the place afterwards became the property of Cortes, and was known as Peñon del Marques.

by water, where, from the towns around about the lake as well as from Temixtitan, many people had collected, for they well knew that our first encounter would be with those of Iztapalapa, and they were there for their own defence and also to attack us if possible. When they saw the fleet coming, they began to shout and make great smoke signals so that all the cities of the lake might know and be prepared. Although my intention was to attack that part of Iztapalapa which is on the water, we retraced our course to that hill or knoll and I leaped on it with a hundred and fifty men; it was very steep and high and it was with much difficulty that we began to ascend it. We stormed their trenches on the top, and pitched into them in such wise that not one of them escaped, except the women and children. In this fight they wounded twenty-five Spaniards, but it was a beautiful victory.

As the people of Iztapalapa had made smoke signals from some towers of their idols which stand on a very high hill near the city, Temixtitan and the other cities on the water knew that I had already entered the lake with the brigantines, and they quickly assembled a very great fleet of canoes to attack us, and to discover what sort of things the brigantines were; and from what we could judge the canoes exceeded five hundred in number. When I saw that their course was straight towards us, I, and the people who had disembarked on that great hill, re-embarked in great haste, and I ordered the captains of the brigantines not to move at all, so that the canoes believing that from fear of them we did not dare to move out towards them might decide to attack us. Thus they directed their fleet against us with great impetus; but at about two arrow-shots' distance they stopped and remained still. I strongly desired that the first encounter with them should be a great victory and inspire them with a dread of the brigantines, which held the

key of the whole war, for both the Mexicans and we were exposed to the greatest damage on the water. It pleased Our Lord that, while we were observing one another, a very favourable land wind sprang up, enabling us to attack them; so I immediately ordered the captains to break through the fleet of canoes and pursue them till they took refuge in Temixtitan. As the wind was very good, we bore down in the midst of them, though they fled as fast as they could, and destroyed an infinite number of canoes and killed and drowned many of the enemy, the greatest sight to be seen in the world. We followed them in this pursuit fully three long leagues, until we shut them up amidst the houses of the city; and thus it pleased Our Lord to give us the best and greatest victory which we could have asked or desired.

The garrison of Cuyoacan could see better than that of Tacuba the movements of the brigantines, and when they beheld all the thirteen sails on the water, favoured by such good weather, knocking the enemy's canoes to pieces, they afterwards assured me it was the one thing in the world which gave them the most pleasure and that they most wished for. As I have said, they and those at Tacuba strongly wished me to come there, and with good reason, for both garrisons were in the midst of such multitudes of enemies; but Our Lord miraculously inspired them and diminished the enemy's courage so that they were unable to decide to attack our camp, but had they done so, they would have done great harm to the Spaniards, although they were always well prepared and determined to conquer or die, like men cut off from all succour save what they hoped from God. When the garrison of Cuyoacan saw us pursuing the canoes, most of the horsemen and foot soldiers took the road towards the city of Temixtitan, and fought very stoutly with the Indians who were on the causeway. They captured the trenches which had been made, and passed over many

abandoned bridges, on foot and on horseback under cover of the brigantines which sailed near the causeway. Our allies of Tascaltecal and the Spaniards pursued the enemy, some of whom they killed and others they forced to seek refuge in the water on the other side of the causeway from where the brigantines approached. Thus victoriously they advanced a long league on the causeway until they reached the place where I stopped with the brigantines, as I shall hereafter relate.

The Fortress of Xoloc

We continued chasing the canoes with the brigantines for nearly three leagues. Those which escaped us took refuge amongst the houses of the city, and, as it was already vespers, I ordered the brigantines to retire, and we arrived with them at the causeway. Here I determined to land with thirty men and capture two small towers[1] of their idols, which were surrounded by a low wall of stone and mortar; and, when we landed, they fought us very stoutly to defend them, but finally after much danger and trouble we captured them. I immediately landed and mounted three heavy iron field pieces which I had brought. As about half a league of that causeway between that point and the city was crowded with the enemy, and on both sides of the causeway the water was covered with canoes full of warriors, I ordered one of the field pieces to be aimed and fired, which raked the causeway, and did much execution amongst the enemy. Owing to the carelessness of the gunner, all our powder was set fire to when he fired, although it was little. I presently sent a brigantine to

[1] This was the small fortress called Xoloc, which stood at the junction of the causeways leading to Itztapalapan and Cuyoacan respectively. It consisted of two small towers surrounded by a wall, and was not large enough to hold a numerous garrison, and hence was easily captured by the Spaniards. It was just after passing Xoloc that the first meeting between Montezuma and Cortes took place.

Iztapalapa, some two leagues distant, where the alguacil mayor was, to bring all the powder he had.

Although, at the beginning, it was my intention on embarking in the brigantines to go to Cuyoacan and plan to do as much damage as possible, as soon as I had landed on the causeway that day and had captured those two towers, I determined to establish my headquarters there, and to keep the brigantines near the towers. I also ordered the force at Cuyoacan and some fifty of the alguacil mayor's soldiers to come there next day. Having determined these measures, we passed the night with caution, for we were in much danger, as all the people of the city gathered there on the causeway and on the water. At midnight a great multitude of people arrived in canoes and began to attack our camp by the causeway: certainly they threw us into great fear and alarm, especially as it was at night and they never attack at such an hour nor had they ever been seen to fight at night except when they were very sure of victory. As we were well prepared, we fought with them, using the small field pieces from the brigantines, each of which carried one, and the archers and musketeers did their part. Thus they dared not advance further, nor did they arrive near enough to do us any injury; so they left off attacking us for the remainder of the night.

Next morning at daybreak, there arrived at my camp on the causeway, fifteen archers and musketeers, fifty men armed with swords and shields, and seven or eight horsemen from the garrison at Cuyoacan. When they got there, those of the city were fighting with us from canoes and on the causeway, and the multitude was such that on land and water we could see nothing but people, who shouted and yelled so that it seemed the world was sinking. We fought with them, advancing on the causeway and capturing a bridge which they had removed, and a barricade they had made at its entrance. We did them such

damage with the field pieces and the horsemen, that we almost shut them up amidst the first houses of the city. As many canoes were collected on the other side of the causeway where the brigantines could not pass, doing us much harm with the arrows and darts they discharged at us on the causeway, I ordered an opening to be made near our camp, and sent four brigantines through from the other side, which as soon as they passed through, shut up all the canoes amongst the houses of the city, so that they did not dare in any way to come out into the open. On the other side of the causeway, the other eight brigantines fought with the canoes and shut them up amongst the houses, following in amongst them, where, until then, they had not ventured to go, because there were so many shallows and stakes which prevented them. When they found canals where the brigantines could enter with safety, they fought with the people in the canoes and captured some of them, and burned many of the houses in the outskirts. We spent all that day in fighting in the aforesaid manner.

Cortes Completely Invests Mexico

The following day, the alguacil mayor departed from Iztapalapa with his people, Spaniards as well as our allies, for Cuyoacan whence there is a causeway about a league and a half in length to the mainland. After making about a quarter of a league, the alguacil mayor reached a small city [Mexicaltzingo] which is also on the water, in many parts of which it was possible to ride on horseback; the inhabitants began fighting with him, but he routed them, killing many, and burning and destroying the entire city. When I learned that the Indians had made a great breach in the causeway, which the people could not easily cross, I sent two brigantines to help them, and these were used as bridges for the foot soldiers to cross over. When they had crossed, they went to camp at Cuyoacan, and the alguacil mayor with

ten horsemen took the causeway road to our camp. Upon his arrival he found us fighting, so he and his men joined in and began to fight with the people on the causeway with whom we were engaged. When the alguacil mayor began to fight, the enemy pierced his foot with a dart, but, although he and some others were wounded that day, we did such harm amongst them with the large field pieces and cross-bows and muskets, that neither those in the canoes, nor those on the causeway, dared come near us, but showed more fear and less pride than they had formerly exhibited. Thus we remained six days, having daily combat with them, and the brigantines set fire to all the houses they could in the outskirts of the city, for they discovered canals by which they could enter the outskirts and environs, and penetrated to the heart of it.

This produced a very desirable effect, as they put a stop to the movements of the canoes, none of which dared to come within a quarter of a league of our camp. The next day, Pedro de Alvarado, captain of the garrison at Tacuba, reported to me that the people of Temixtitan came in and out as they pleased by a highway which leads to some towns on the mainland, and by another small one which joins it, and he believed that should they find themselves hard pressed, they would escape by that way. Although I desired their departure more than they themselves did, as we could more easily overcome them on the mainland than in the big fortress they had on the water, nevertheless in order to completely shut them in so that they could not profit by anything from the mainland, I ordered the alguacil mayor (although he was wounded), to go and plant his camp at a little village at the end of one of the two causeways. He left with twenty-three horsemen, a hundred foot soldiers, eighteen archers and musketeers, leaving me fifty other soldiers for my company; and,

when he arrived the next day, he planted his camp where I had commanded him. Thenceforward the city of Temixtitan was surrounded on all sides wherever they could reach the mainland by the causeways.

I had, Very Powerful Lord, two hundred Spanish foot soldiers in the camp on the causeway, amongst whom were twenty-five archers and musketeers, besides the people on the brigantines, who were more than two hundred and fifty. As we had the enemy completely invested and had many friendly warriors, I determined to penetrate into the city as far as possible by the causeway, while the brigantines should cover our rear on the one side and the other. I ordered some horsemen and foot soldiers of the division in Cuyoacan to repair to my camp and enter with us, and ten horsemen to remain at the entrance of the causeway, protecting our rear. It seemed best that some force should remain in Cuyoacan, because the natives of Suchimilco, Culuacan, Iztapalapa, Chilobusco, Mexicàlcingo, Cuitaguacad, and Mizquique, which are all on the water, were rebellious and in favour of those of the city, and should they wish to take us on our rear, we would be protected by those ten or twelve horsemen I ordered to guard the causeway, while many more remained in Cuyoacan with more than ten thousand Indian allies. I likewise ordered the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado to attack, from their positions, that same day, for I wished on my part to gain as much of the city as was possible.

First Entrance into the City

Thus, I left the camp early in the morning, and advanced on foot along the causeway. We speedily found the enemy, defending a breach in the road, one lance-length in width and as much in depth, where they had built an earthwork; both our attack and their defence were very stubborn. Finally we took it, and advanced further by the causeway, until we reached the entrance of

the city, where stood a tower of their idols, at the foot of which was a broad, high bridge, crossing a very wide street of water defended by another strong earthwork. As we reached this place, they began to attack us, but as the brigantines were on both sides of the causeway, we took it without loss, which would have been impossible without their aid. As soon as they began to abandon the earthwork, our men landed from the brigantines, and we crossed the water, as did those of Tascaltecal, Guajocingo, Calco, and Tesaico, who were more than eighty thousand men. While we filled up that broken bridge with stones and adobes, the Spaniards captured another earthwork in the principal street, which is the broadest one in the city, but, there being no water there, it was very easily captured. They followed in pursuit of the enemy the whole length of the street until the latter reached another bridge which had been raised, with the exception of one broad beam by which they crossed. After the enemy had safely crossed to where they were protected by the water, they quickly removed it. They had thrown up on the other side of the bridge another great breastwork of earth and adobes. When we arrived there, we could not pass without throwing ourselves into the water, and this was very dangerous, as the enemy fought very valiantly, and on both sides of the street there was an infinite number of them fighting very stoutly from the roofs; but when some archers and musketeers arrived and we fired with two field pieces up the street, we did them much damage. As soon as we saw this, certain Spaniards threw themselves into the water and crossed to the other side, which it required two hours to accomplish. When the enemy saw them cross, they abandoned the breastwork and the roofs, and took to flight through the street, and thus all our people passed over.

I immediately ordered that bridge filled up and the

breastwork destroyed, and meanwhile the Spaniards continucd the pursuit along the street and our Indian allies followed for about two bow-shots distance until they reached another bridge which is near the square and the principal buildings of the city. They had not removed this bridge nor did they have an earthwork, for they never thought we would gain what we did that day, nor did even we expect to accomplish half as much. A field piece was placed at the entrance of the square, and did the enemy much damage, for they were so numerous that they completely filled the space. The Spaniards, seeing there was no water there, which was the usual danger, determined to penetrate into the square, and, when those of the city saw this determination carried out, and beheld the great multitude of our allies, (although they were not afraid of them without us) they fled, and the Spaniards and our allies pursued them till they shut them up in the court of their idols, which is surrounded by a wall of stone and mortar. As will have been seen from another description of this, it has as great a circumference as a town of four hundred households; it was however quickly abandoned by them, and the Spaniards and our allies captured it, remaining in it and on the towers for a long while. When the inhabitants of the city discovered there were no horsemen, they turned against the Spaniards and expelled them by force from the towers and the court and enclosure, during which our men found themselves in much hardship and danger; as they came in more than a retreat[1] they turned under the arches of the courtyard. But the enemy attacking them very stoutly, they abandoned this position and retired to the square, whence they were expelled by force and driven into the street, so that the field piece there had to be abandoned. The Spaniards, being unable

[1] *Como iban mas que retraiendose* is the quaint device of Cortes to avoid saying that the Spaniards were in full flight.

to withstand the force of the enemy, had to retreat exposed to great danger, in the midst of which it pleased God that three horsemen should advance into the square; when the enemy saw them they believed there were more, and took to flight; and the horsemen killed some of them and recaptured the court and enclosure I mentioned above. In the principal and highest tower, which has a hundred and some steps to the top, ten or twelve of the principal Indians of the city fortified themselves, but four or five Spaniards forced their way up and overpowered and killed all of them in spite of their stout defence.[1] Five or six horsemen afterwards concerted with others and laid an ambush in which they killed more than thirty of the enemy.

As it was now late, I ordered our people to collect and retire, and, while doing so, such a multitude of the enemy pressed on them, that, had it not been for the horsemen, the Spaniards could not possibly have escaped without injury. But, as I had had all the difficult passes in the street and causeway, where danger was anticipated, well filled in with adobes by the time of retiring, the horsemen could easily move about, so they turned against the enemy, who were harassing our rear-guard four or five times in the length of the street, killing some of them with their lances. Although the enemy saw they sustained damage, the dogs rushed on so furiously that we could not check them nor would they stop following us. The whole day would have been spent in this manner, had they not already taken many terraces giving on to the street, and the horsemen were

[1] The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, is authority for the story that Cortes and his Texcocan ally, Prince Ixtlilochitl, headed this assault upon the great teocalli, penetrating into the sanctuary of the idol; and that Cortes himself tore away the jewelled mask of gold from the idol's face while the Prince of Texcoco struck off its head with his sword. In the absence of any mention of these details by Cortes or any other witnesses, this version seems unworthy of credence.

from this cause in much danger. Thus we hastened forward along the causeway to our camp without losing a single Spaniard, although we had some wounded; and we set fire to most of the best houses in that street, so that when we entered again they could not injure us from the roofs. The alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado fought very stoutly this day from their positions, and at the time of the combats we were a league and a half from one another; the population of the city is so extended that perhaps I even diminish the distance between us. Our allies who were with them were infinite and fought very well, retiring that day without sustaining any loss.[1]

Don Fernando of Texcoco

In the meantime, Don Fernando, Lord of Tesaico and the province of Aculuacan, of whom I have heretofore made relation to Your Majesty, succeeded in winning over all the natives of his city and province to our friendship, who till now were not so steadfast in it as they afterwards became. Many chiefs and the brothers of Don Fernando daily joined him, determined to declare for us and to fight against those of Mexico and Temixtitan. As Don Fernando was still a youth and professed great love for the Spaniards, recognising the favour, which, in the name of Your Majesty, had been extended to him in the gift of so great a lordship, though there were others

[1] It seems incredible that neither Spaniards nor allies should have sustained any loss in this long day's fighting, which, though it ended to their advantage, had witnessed their utter rout and the capture of their gun on the square. Bernal Diaz, who was fighting under Alvarado, on the causeway from the Tacuba side, gives a more convincing description of the daily losses and the wounds which the men had to dress as best they could when they returned at night to their camp. There was a soldier Juan Catalan, who was reputed to have the gift of healing by prayer and charms, who had his hands full, as the Indians also placed faith in him, and brought him all their wounded. "I say," he piously adds, "that it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy to give us strength and to speedily heal us."

whose rights to it preceded his, he worked his utmost to induce his vassals to come and fight against those of the city, and expose themselves to the same danger and hardship as we ourselves. He spoke with his brothers, six or seven in number, all well disposed, beseeching them to bring all the people of their lordships to help me. He sent one of them, called Istrisuchil, who is twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, very brave, beloved and feared of all, as captain, who arrived at the camp on the causeway with more than thirty thousand warriors, very well supplied in their fashion, and another twenty thousand joined the other two camps.[1] I received them gladly, thanking them for their good disposition and conduct. Your Cæsarian Majesty may well judge how valuable was this help and friendship from Don Fernando, and how those of Temixtitan felt it, to see those whom they considered their vassals, friends, relatives, and even fathers, brothers, and sons, marching against them.

Fighting went on in the city for two days, as I have said above. As soon as these people came to our help, the natives of Suchimilco, which is on the lake, and some Utumie[2] tribes who are a mountain people, more nu-

[1] The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, contradicts Cortes on this point, affirming that the boy-king Fernando was already dead, and that his brother Ixtlilochitl reigned. Both these princes bore the same Christian name of Fernando, hence the natural and unimportant confusion of their identity, but, as Cortes says nothing of the first one's death, which he could have no motive in misrepresenting, and distinguishes very clearly between the two, his version, given at the time, must prevail over that of a later writer. The same chronicler claims that Ixtlilochitl fought throughout the siege with the Spaniards, performing prodigies of valour, and he reproaches Cortes for suppressing all mention of these services in his despatches, and for failing to recompense him and his people after the victory to which their valour so largely contributed (Orozco y Berra, lib. iii., cap. vi.).

[2] Otomies: tribes inhabiting the mountain regions to the west. Orozco y Berra gives June 11th as the probable date of their arrival in the camp.

merous than those of Suchimilco, and who were slaves of Montezuma, came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, begging me to pardon their tardiness. I received them very well, and was pleased at their coming, for they constituted the only danger to our camp in Cuyoacan.

From the camp on the causeway we had, with the help of the brigantines, burned many houses in the outskirts of the city, and not a canoe dared venture there. I deemed it sufficient for our safety to keep seven brigantines about our camp, and I therefore decided to send three to each of the other camps of the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, instructing the captains that, as supplies of fresh water, fruits, maize, and other provisions came from the mainland on those sides, they should cruise about both day and night, taking turns, and moreover that they should back up our people when we planned an assault to force an entrance into the city. The allotment of these six brigantines to the two other camps was a very necessary and profitable measure, for every day and night they captured many canoes and prisoners.

These measures being decided, and the people above mentioned having come peaceably to our help, I told them I had determined to enter and fight in the city two days hence, that therefore they should all assemble, by that time, well prepared and furnished for war; for by this I would recognise whether they were our true friends; and they promised to be ready. The next day, I had the people prepared and equipped, and I wrote to the camps and two brigantines what I had determined and what they should do.

After having heard mass next morning, and having instructed the captains as to what they should do, I left our quarters with fifteen or twenty horsemen and three hundred Spaniards and all our allies, who were an

infinite number, and, advancing along the causeway, we found the enemy already waiting for us, three bow-shots from the camp, yelling fearfully. During the three preceding days there had been no fighting with them so they had undone all we had accomplished in filling up the breaches in the causeway, making them very much stronger and more dangerous to capture than before. The brigantines accompanied us on both sides of the causeway, for they could approach very near, and do much damage with field pieces, muskets, and crossbows. Discovering this, our men landed and captured the breast-works and bridge; we crossed to the other side and pursued the enemy, who immediately fortified themselves in the other breast-works and bridges they had prepared, which, although with greater trouble and danger than before, we also captured, expelling them from the street and square where the great houses of the city stand. I ordered that no Spaniard should leave there while I and our allies were filling the breaks in the causeway with stones and adobes, which was such a labour, that although ten thousand Indians helped us, it was already the hour of vespers when we had finished making repairs; during all which time the Spaniards and our allies were constantly fighting and skirmishing and preparing ambushes, in which many of the enemy perished. I rode with the horsemen through the city for a while, and in the streets where there is no water, we killed with our lances all whom we could catch, thus holding them at a distance, nor did they dare to come on dry ground. Seeing that they were so rebellious and showed such determination to defend themselves to the death, I inferred two things: first that we should recover little or none of the treasures they had taken from us, and the other, that they gave occasion and forced us to totally destroy them. This last reason caused me the greater grief, for it weighed

Second General Assault on the City

on my soul and made me reflect on what means I might employ to frighten them, so that they should realise their error and the injury they would sustain from us; and I kept on burning and destroying the towers of their idols and their houses. In order to make them feel it the more, I this day ordered fire to be set to the great houses in the square, where the Spaniards and I had first been quartered when they expelled us from the city. They were so extensive that a prince with more than six hundred persons of his household and retinue could be lodged in them. Some others close to them, though somewhat smaller, were also very splendid and fine, and Montezuma kept all kinds of birds in them. Although it grieved me much, I determined, as it grieved them even more, to burn these edifices. This seemed to cause the enemies immense sorrow, as well as to their allies in the cities about the lake, for none of them ever thought our force would be sufficient to penetrate so far into the city; and they were greatly dismayed. After setting fire to those houses, I collected our people, as it was already late, in order to return to our camp, and, when those of the city saw we were retiring, an infinite number of them charged us and fell upon us furiously, attacking our rear-guard. As the whole street was available to the horsemen, we turned on them, lancing many every time; nevertheless they would not keep away from our rear, yelling all the time. On this day, they felt and showed great dismay, especially when they saw us in their city, burning and destroying it, and the natives of Tesaico, Calco, Suchimilco, and the Otomies fighting against them, each shouting the name of his province; and in another quarter those of Tascaltecal, all showing them their countrymen cut in pieces, telling them they would sup off them that night and breakfast off them next morning, as in fact they did. We returned to our camp to rest, for we had laboured much during

that day, and my seven brigantines had entered that day into the city by the water streets and burned a greater part of it. The captions of the other camps and the six brigantines fought very well that day, and about what happened to them I might dilate a great deal, but to avoid prolixity, omit doing so, and limit myself to saying that after the victory they retired to their camp without suffering any loss.

Third General Assault on the City

Early in the morning of the following day, after having heard mass, I returned to the city with all the people in the same order, so as not to give the enemy time to excavate the bridges and rebuild the barricades; but notwithstanding that we were very early, two of the three water streets, which crossed the street leading from this camp to the large houses of the square, had been re-established as during the preceding days and were very difficult to capture; so much so that the combat lasted from eight o'clock in the morning till one o'clock in the afternoon, during which we used up almost all the arrows, ammunition, and musket balls, which the archers and musketeers had with them. Your Majesty may well believe that our danger each time we captured these bridges was unequalled, because to take them, the Spaniards were obliged to swim across to the other side, which many could not do, because the enemy awaited them with knife and lance thrusts to prevent their landing. But as they no longer had roofs on the other side from whence to injure us, and we used our crossbows from this side on them (for we were the throw of a horseshoe from each other), the Spaniards daily gathered new courage and were determined to cross, for they saw my determination, and sink or swim, the thing must be done. It may seem to Your Majesty, that after having gone through such danger to gain these bridges and barricades, that we were negligent in not holding them after having won them, so

as not to be obliged every day to again go over so much danger and trouble, which unquestionably were very great, and certainly it must appear thus to those who were absent. But Your Majesty should know that this could in no wise be done, because two things were required to do it, either that the camp should be transferred from where it was to the square enclosure of the towers of the idols, or that a guard should be placed at the bridges during the night; and neither one nor the other could be done without great danger, nor was there possibility of it, because placing the camp in the city we should have had to sustain a thousand contests day and night and at every hour, and they would have fought us and given us intolerable labour, attacking us on every side, they being so many and we so few. As for placing people to guard the bridges by night, the Spaniards were so weary after fighting all day, that it was impossible to do this, and hence we were obliged to retake them every day when we entered the city. That day, as we were delayed in retaking those bridges and refilling them, no time was left for anything else, except that by another principal street leading to the city of Tacuba, two other bridges were captured and filled up, and many good houses in this street were burned; thus the afternoon came on and with it the hour for retiring, which was always accompanied by little less danger than taking the bridges, for seeing that we were in retreat, those of the city would recover as much courage as if they had won the greatest victory in the world, and we were flying from them. To retire it was necessary that the bridges should be well filled up and made level with the ground of the streets, so that the horsemen might freely gallop from one place to another; and as they pursued so eagerly we sometimes feigned in the retreat to be flying, and then the horsemen would turn on them and we would always capture twelve or thirteen of the bravest, and with these

manœuvres and some ambushes we constantly laid for them, they would always get the worst of it. Certainly it was an admirable thing to see, for, although the injury and damage, with which they were threatened from us at the hour of our retreat, was notorious, they would nevertheless follow us until they saw us out of the city. With this we returned to our camp, and the captains of the other camps reported to me that they had done very well that day, and had killed many people by water and land.

The captain Pedro de Alvarado who was in Tacuba, wrote to me that he had captured two or three bridges, for he was on the causeway which leads from the market of Temixtitan to Tacuba, and the three brigantines I had given him could reach a landing place on the same causeway, and he had not been exposed to as much danger as on the preceding days, and where he was there were more bridges and breaks in the causeway, although there were fewer roofs than in the other directions.

Defection of the Mexican's Vassals

During all this time the natives of Iztapalapa, Oichilobuzco, Culuacan, Mezquique, and Cuitaguaca, which as I have said are on the fresh-water lake, would never seek peace, nor had we all this time sustained any injury from them; and as the Calcans were very loyal vassals of Your Majesty, and saw that we had enough to do with those of the great city, they joined with other towns on the borders of the lake, to do all the damage they could to those towns on the water. Seeing we were daily victorious over those of Temixtitan, and on account of the injury they were sustaining and might sustain from our friends, these rebellious natives determined to come; and they arrived in our camp and besought me to pardon them the past, and to order the Calcans and their other neighbours to do them no further injury.[1] I told them

[1] The perfidy of these people dealt a terrible blow to Quanhtemotzin and the defenders of Temixtitan, for to their defection they

I was pleased with this and harboured no anger against any except those of the city; and that we might believe their friendship sincere, I prayed them, that inasmuch as I was determined not to raise the siege till I had taken the city by peace or war, and as they had many canoes capable of aiding me, they should prepare everything they could with as many warriors as were in their towns, to henceforward aid us on the water. I also prayed them that inasmuch as the Spaniards had few and miserable huts, and it was the rainy season, to build us as many houses in the camp as they could, and to bring adobes and beams from the houses of the city which were nearest to the camp. They answered that the canoes and warriors were prepared every day, and they served me so well in building the houses, that, between the two towers on the one side and the other and the causeway where I was lodged, they built so many that from the first house to the last, there was a distance of three or four bow-shots. Your Majesty may see how broad is this causeway, which crosses the deepest part of the lake, from the fact that between these houses, built on both sides, there was

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added treachery of the blackest complexion. Their chiefs appeared before the Emperor with offers of assistance, which were gratefully accepted by the hard-pressed sovereign. Their troops were assigned places, and, when the fighting began, made a feint at first of attacking the Spanish allies, but afterwards suddenly turned their arms against the Mexicans who were of course taken completely by surprise; their chiefs quickly rallied, however, and bringing up fresh troops the traitors soon got the worst of it, and, leaving many dead, and others prisoners, the remainder fled from the city. The prisoners were upbraided by Macehuatzin, lord of Cuitlahuac, who decapitated four of the principal ones with his own hand and delivered the others to Quauhtemotzin, who ordered them to be sacrificed in the temples of Mexico and Tlatelolco (Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxxiv.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. cxiii.). One of the worst effects of the defection of the lake towns was to cut off the supplies of fresh water and food, which, in spite of the vigilance of the brigantines, they had found means to transport into the beleaguered city. Henceforth hunger was added to the horrors of the siege, while the Spanish camp was enriched by supplies of fresh provisions.

ample room to go and come on foot and horseback. There were constantly in the camp, between Spaniards and Indian servants, more than two thousand persons. All the warriors, our friends, were lodged in Cuyoacan, a league and a half from the camp; and the people of these towns likewise supplied us with provisions, of which we stood in great need; especially with fish and cherries, of which there is such a quantity about here, that, during the five or six months of the year they last, they are sufficient for double the inhabitants of the country.

As we on our side had entered the city two or three days successively, besides three or four before, and had always been victorious against the enemy and had killed an infinite number, with our field-pieces, crossbows, and muskets, we thought that any hour they would move to propose peace, which we desired as our own salvation; but nothing availed to bring them to this determination. To reduce them to greater straits, and to see if they could be forced to make peace, I decided to enter the city each day in three or four divisions. I therefore ordered all the people of the cities situated on the water, to come in their canoes, so that day there were in our camp more than a hundred thousand men, our friends. And I ordered the four brigantines, with half the canoes (as many as fifteen hundred) to go on one side, and the other three, with as many more canoes, to go on another, and overrun the greater part of the city and burn and do all the damage they could. I entered by the principal street and found it all free up to the large houses of the square, none of the bridges having been opened. I advanced to the street which leads to Tacuba, where there were six or seven bridges. From there, I ordered a captain to enter another street, with sixty or seventy men and six horsemen to protect their rear, and with them went more than ten or twelve thousand Indians, our friends; and I ordered another captain to do the same in another street; and I,

with the remaining people, advanced on the street to Tacuba. We captured three bridges which we filled up, and, because it was already late, left the others for another day, when it could be better done, for I wished to occupy that street so that the people of Pedro de Alvarado's camp might communicate with ours, and go from one camp to the other, and the brigantines the same. That day was one of great victory, both on water as well as land; and some plunder was obtained from the city. In the camps of the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado there was also great victory.

Disastrous Operations of Alvarado

The next day, I again entered the city in the same order as before, and God gave us such a triumph that, in the parts where I penetrated, there seemed to be no resistance at all, and the enemy retired so rapidly that it appeared we had captured three-fourths of the city. The division of Pedro de Alvarado also attacked them briskly, and, undoubtedly on that day and the day before, I was positive they would sue for peace, in favour of which, with or without victory, I made every demonstration I could. Nevertheless, we saw no sign of peace in them, and we retired that day to our camp, very gladly, although we were grieved to our very hearts to see their determination to die. In these past days, Pedro de Alvarado had captured many bridges, and, in order to hold and defend them, he placed a guard of foot soldiers and horsemen on them throughout the night, while the remainder of his people returned to camp, three-quarters of a league from there. As this labour was unendurable, he determined to move his camp to the end of the causeway leading to the market place of Temixtitan, which has a square much larger than that of Salamanca, all surrounded by arcades, to reach which it was necessary to capture only two or three more bridges, but as they were very broad and dangerous, he was occupied in it some days, during which he

fought constantly, and obtained victory. And that day of which I spoke in the past chapter, when he saw the enemies waver, and that where I was engaged they gave continual and stout combats, he got such a taste of victory with the bridges and barricades he had captured, that he determined to pass them, and capture a bridge where they had destroyed the causeway for more than sixty paces, and where the water had entered to a depth of about nine feet; and as the attack was made the same day and the brigantines helped so much, he crossed the water and captured the bridge and pursued the enemy who fled. Pedro de Alvarado hastened to have that pass filled so that the horsemen might cross, and also because I had daily admonished him by writing and by word of mouth not to gain a palm of ground without having the exit and entrance for the horsemen absolutely assured, as they in reality sustained the war. When the enemy saw there were only forty or fifty Spaniards and some of our friends on the other side, and that the horsemen could not cross, they turned on them so quickly that they drove them back and into the water, where they captured three or four Spaniards alive, who were immediately sacrificed; and they killed some of our friends.[1]

[1] Cortes says nothing of the losses suffered by the Spaniards during the operations of these days, though they were considerable enough to merit notice. The Mexicans had arranged a clever device for capturing the brigantines, which was partially successful. They stationed thirty of their largest canoes, full of warriors, amongst some rushes, and drove a number of stakes into the bottom of the lake in such wise as to impede the movements of the brigantines. Some smaller canoes, such as usually carried supplies, were then sent into the open, where they were quickly discovered by the Spaniards, who gave chase, allowing themselves to be drawn into the trap, where the stakes interfered with their movements. The captain of one of the brigantines, Portillo, was killed, and Pedro Barbo was mortally wounded; many others were wounded, and the Mexicans carried off one brigantine in triumph. They paid dearly for this victory, for Cortes was so much mortified by this disaster, that a counter ambuscade was prepared, which drew the Mexicans successfully, and in which

Finally Pedro de Alvarado retired to his camp, and when I arrived in ours that day and learned what had happened, it caused me the greatest grief in the world, as this was an event to encourage the enemy, and they might think that we would not again dare to enter. The reason why Pedro de Alvarado wished to take the bad pass, was, as I say, because he had overcome a great part of the Indians' force, and they showed some weakness, and chiefly because his people importuned him to capture the market-place; for, having gained that, almost the entire city would be taken, as all the forces and hopes of the Indians centred there: and, as Alvarado's men saw that I stoutly continued to combat the Indians, they feared

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they suffered severe loss of many canoes, a number of slain, and others prisoners. The Aztecs had one formidable warrior of giant stature, called Tzilacatzin, who was wonderfully skilful with his sling, every stone he sent bringing down its man. He was made the aim of all the Spanish archers, and musketeers, his great stature making him easily distinguishable, but they could never hit him. On one of these days eighteen Spaniards were captured alive and sacrificed, their bodies being afterwards cut up and distributed to be eaten. Another day a furious assault led by a daring warrior of Tlatelolco called Tlapanecatl, almost succeeded in capturing the ensign Corral who carried the Spanish standard, and did carry off no less than fifty-three Castilian prisoners, besides numerous of the allies, and four horses all of whom were sacrificed in the various temples. In the rout of Alvarado, which Cortes here briefly mentions, but which was a complete disaster, five more Spaniards were taken alive, besides many Indian prisoners; a horseman and his horse were drowned, and the survivors, all badly wounded, and utterly demoralised, drew off to their camp amidst the victorious shouts of the Mexicans. The latter followed up to the very camp, but were repulsed with loss by a small battery stationed there, which was worked by an able engineer, named Medrano. The guns were so placed that they raked the entire causeway, and as the brigantines used their guns on both sides, the camp was effectively protected (Bernal Diaz, cap. cii.; Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxxvi.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. xciii.). Alvarado was an intrepid commander, and, nothing daunted by his repulse, he continued for four days to renew his attack at the same point, until, on Friday, June 28th, he finally captured the bridge. Six more Spaniards perished in these combats, besides the wounded and allies whose dead were unnumbered.

that I might capture the market place before they did, and as they were nearer to it than we, they held it as a point of honour to take it first. For this reason the said Pedro de Alvarado was much importuned, and the same happened to me in our camp, for all the Spaniards eagerly besought me to enter by one of the three streets leading to the market-place, for we found little resistance, and that once captured we would have less hardship. I alleged every possible reason for not doing it, although I concealed the real cause, which was the inconvenience and dangers which presented themselves to me; for in order to reach the market-place, there were infinite roofs and bridges and broken causeways, so that each house by which we had to pass, was converted into an island surrounded by water.

When I learned, that afternoon upon reaching the camp, of Pedro de Alvarado's disaster, I determined to go to his camp the next morning, to rebuke him for what had happened, and to see what had been accomplished, and where he had moved his camp, and to advise him as to his security, and for the attack on the enemy. I was undoubtedly astonished, when I reached his camp, to see how far towards the middle of the city it was, and the bad places and bridges he had taken, so that I no longer blamed him so much as he had seemed to deserve; having talked with him, therefore, about what he should do, I returned that day to our camp.

Impatience of Cortes's Division

This finished, I effected several entries into the city at the usual points, and the brigantines and canoes fought in two places, and I in four others within the city, and we always obtained the victory, and many of the adversaries were killed because numberless people daily returned in our favour. I hesitated to penetrate farther into the city, on the one hand that our enemies might reconsider their determination and stubbornness, and on the other because

our entrance could not be effected without great danger, as they were very united, strong, and desperate unto death. As the Spaniards observed such delay, and that for more than twenty days they had never ceased fighting, they importuned me, in such manner as I have heretofore stated, to enter and take the market-place, because, having gained that, the enemy would have little space left to them from which to defend themselves, and, if they did not surrender, they would die from hunger and thirst, having no water to drink save the salt water of the lake. When I excused myself, the treasurer of Your Majesty told me that the entire camp insisted upon it, and that I ought to do it. I answered him and other persons who were in favour of this plan, that their object and wish were excellent, and that I desired, to do it more than anybody else, but that I refrained for the reason his importunity forced me to say; which was that, although he and others approved of it, there might be others who, on account of the great danger would not. And finally, they forced me so much that I agreed to do what I could, after first consulting the people of the other camps.

The next day I conferred with some of the principal persons of our camp, and we agreed to notify the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado that we would enter the city on the following day, and make an effort to reach the market-place, and I wrote to them what they were to do on the Tacuba side, and, besides writing, I sent two of my servants to explain the whole business, that they might be better informed. The course they were to follow was this: The alguacil mayor was to come, with ten horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, and fifteen musketeers, to Pedro de Alvarado's camp, leaving in his own camp ten other horsemen, with whom he should arrange that they were to lie in ambush behind some houses at the hour of the next day's battle; and that he should remove all his baggage as though he were breaking up his camp,

so that when the enemy came in pursuit, those in ambush would fall upon their rear. The said alguacil mayor with his three brigantines and the three of Pedro de Alvarado were to take that bad pass, where Pedro de Alvarado had been routed, filling it up quickly, and in marching forward they were not to advance one step without having first filled it up and repaired it; and, if they could advance to the market-place without any great risk or danger, they were to make every effort to do so, as I would do the same; and they were to note well that, although I sent to say this, I did not oblige them to advance a single step which might expose them to any defeat or mishap, and that I communicated this to them because I knew them, and that they would put their face to what I ordered them, even though they knew that by it they might lose their lives. My two servants went to the camp and met the said alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado there to whom they stated the case as we had agreed here in our camp. As they had to fight in one place only, and I in many, I had asked them to send me seventy or eighty foot soldiers who would enter with me next day; these came with my two servants and all slept that night in my camp according to the orders which I had sent them.

The Attack on the Market-place

This order given, the next day, after having heard mass, the seven brigantines with more than three hundred canoes of our friends, left our camp, and I, with twenty-five horsemen, my people, and the seventy men from the camp of Tacuba, began our march and entered the city, where I divided them in this manner: From the point we had already reached, three streets led to the market-place, which the Indians called Tianguizco,[1] and into the principal one, leading to the said market-place, I told Your Majesty's treasurer and accountant [Julian de Alderete] to enter, with seventy men and more than fifteen

[1] *Tianguiz* or *Tianquiztli* is the Mexican word for market.

or twenty thousand of our friends, and that in his rear he should take seven horsemen; and that as they captured the bridges and barricades they should be filled up; and they took a dozen men with picks in addition to our friends, who were most useful for the purpose of filling up the bridges. Two other streets lead from the streets of Tacuba to the market-place and are narrower, having more causeways, bridges, and water streets, and I ordered two captains to enter by the broadest of them, with eighty men and more than ten thousand Indians, our friends, and, at the mouth of that street of Tacuba, I placed two heavy field pieces with eight horsemen to guard them. With eight other horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, amongst whom were more than twenty-five archers and musketeers, and with an infinite number of our friends, I pursued my road, penetrating by the other narrow street as far as possible.

I halted the horsemen at the entrance of it, and ordered them on no account to advance from there, nor to follow after me unless I first ordered them to do so. I then dismounted and we arrived at a barricade they had made at the end of a bridge, which we took with a small field piece, the archers and musketeers advancing by a causeway, which the enemy had broken at two or three different places. Besides these three combats we waged, our friends who entered by the roofs and other places were so numerous that it did not seem that anything could resist us. When the Spaniards took those two bridges, the barricades, and the causeway, our friends advanced by the street without taking any spoils, while I remained with about twenty Spaniards on a small island. I observed that certain of our friends were engaged with the enemy, who sometimes would repel them, driving them into the water, but with our assistance they would turn again upon them. Besides this we took care that from certain cross streets those of the city should

not sally out to take at their backs the Spaniards, who were advancing along the street.

They sent to tell me at this time that they had advanced much and were not very far from the market-place, and in any case they wished to push on because they already heard the combat which the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were waging on their side. I sent orders that they should on no account advance a step without leaving the bridges well filled up, so that, if they needed to retreat, the water would be no obstacle or embarrassment, for therein lay the danger; and they returned to tell me that all they had gained were well repaired and I might go myself and see if it was so. Dreading that they might go astray, and commit blunders respecting the filling up of the ditches, I went thither, and found that they had passed over a ditch in the street which was ten paces broad, with water flowing through it ten feet in depth, and that in passing they had thrown wood and maize and reed grass into it; as they had passed few at a time and with care, the wood and maize had not sunk, and they, in the joy of victory, were going ahead so recklessly that they believed the work had been very thoroughly done. The moment I reached that wretched bridge, I saw the Spaniards and many of our friends returning in full flight, and the enemy like dogs setting on them; and, seeing the impending mishap, I began to cry, Stop! Stop! but when I arrived at the water I found it full of Spaniards and Indians as though not one straw had been put into it. The enemy charged so furiously, killing amongst the Spaniards, that they threw themselves into the water with them, and their canoes came by the water streets and captured the Spaniards alive. As the affair came about so suddenly, and I saw the people being killed, I determined to remain there and die fighting; and the most that I and my men could do was to lend our hands to some unlucky Spaniards who were drowning and help them out; and

some came out wounded and others half drowned and others without weapons. I sent them on ahead. Such was the number of the enemy that they surrounded me and some other ten or fifteen who had remained with me.

Being entirely occupied in helping those who were drowning, I had not observed or thought of my own danger, and already certain Indians had grasped me and would have carried me away had it not been for a captain of fifty whom I always had with me, and another youth of my company, who, after God, gave me my life, and, in giving it me, as a valiant man he there lost his own. Meanwhile, the Spaniards who had been routed were retreating by the causeway, and as it was small, and narrow, and on a level with the water which those dogs had intentionally prepared in this manner, and as many of our own friends, who had also been routed, were also going by it, the road was so encumbered, and there was such a delay in advancing, that the enemy had time to come up from both sides and take and kill as many as they chose. And that captain who was with me, called Antonio de Quinomes, said to me, "Let us go away from here and save yourself, as you know that without you none of us can escape"; but seeing that he could not prevail upon me to go, he grasped me by the arms, to force me to retire. Although I would have rejoiced more in death than in life, by the importunity of that and of my other companions, we began to withdraw, fighting with our swords and bucklers against the enemy, who surrounded us. At this moment a servant of mine rode up on horseback and cleared a little space, but immediately a lance thrown from a low roof struck him in the throat, and overthrew him.

Perilous Position of Cortes

In the midst of this great conflict, waiting for the people to pass that small causeway and reach safety while we held back the enemy, a servant of mine ar-

rived with a horse for me to mount, because such was the quantity of mud on that small causeway, brought there by those who fell in and climbed out of the water, that no one could keep his feet, especially on account of the jostling of one another in trying to save themselves. I mounted, but not to fight, because it was impossible on horseback; for, could it have been done, those eight horsemen whom I had left on a small island at the beginning of the causeway would have been there, but they could not do other than go back by it, and even the return was so perilous that two mares mounted by my servants fell from the causeway into the water, one of whom the Indians killed and the other some of our soldiers saved. Another young servant of mine called Cristobal de Guzman mounted a horse, which was given to him at the small island to bring to me to save me, and he and the horse were killed by the enemy before they reached me; his death filled the whole camp with such sadness that the sorrow of those who knew him is still fresh to-day. Finally it pleased God that, after all our troubles, those who were left should reach the street of Tacuba, which is very broad, and, having collected the people, I, with my horsemen, stopped in the rear, where the enemy were charging with such triumph and pride that it seemed that they would leave nobody alive. Retiring as best I could, I sent word to the treasurer and accountant to retreat to the square in good order. I sent the same order to the other two captains who had entered by the street leading to the market, both of whom had fought valiantly and captured many barricades and bridges which they completely filled up, from which cause they were able to retreat without injury. Before the treasurer and accountant retired from the breastwork where they were fighting, those of the city had already thrown two or three heads of Christians at them, although then they did not know whether they came from Pedro de Alvarado's

camp or from ours. And we all gathered in the square, so many of the enemy charging on us from every side that we had enough to do to keep them off, and even in places where before this rout they would never have dared to come, they killed three horsemen and ten soldiers. Immediately after, in one of the towers of their idols which was near the square, they offered many perfumes and incense of gums which they use in this country, very much like *anime*, offering them up to their idols in sign of victory; and even if we had wanted to stop this it could not be done, as almost all the people were already hastening towards the camp. In this rout, the adversary killed thirty-five or forty Spaniards and more than one thousand Indians, our friends, and wounded more than twenty Christians; and I came out wounded in one leg. A small field piece was lost and many crossbows, muskets, and arms.[1]

[1] This was the last victorious day for the Mexicans, and witnessed their culminating effort against their foes. Quauhtemotzin was everywhere present amongst his troops, urging them to a supreme struggle, and sounding his trumpet of conch-shell, "upon hearing which signal" Bernal Diaz says, "it is impossible to describe the fury with which they closed upon us" (cap. ciii.). Dominating the shouts of "Santiago!" the screams of the wounded, the crash of arms, and the fierce war-cries of the Mexicans, was heard the lugubrious roll of the sacred *Tlapanhuehuetl* of serpents' skins which the priests beat with inspired frenzy before the war-god on the teocalli. Cortes again owed his escape from instant death to the determination which obsessed the Mexicans to take him alive for the sacrifice. His rescuer was the same Cristobal de Olea who had once before come to his aid in a moment of peril at Xochimilco; with one blow of his sword he cut off the arm of the warrior who held the general, falling dead himself the next moment.

Bernal Diaz says that Olea slew four chiefs before he himself fell (*loco citato*).

Seven horses were killed, seventy Spaniards were captured alive, Cortes was badly wounded in the leg; Sandoval likewise in three places and both his division and that of Alvarado suffered serious reverses. When an account came to be taken of the extent of the disaster, dismay filled the sinking hearts of the Spaniards, and the Indian allies began to doubt the power of the *teules* and to ask themselves whether they were not after all fighting on the wrong side.

Cortes threw the blame for this catastrophe on Alderete, who had dis-

Immediately after obtaining this victory, the defenders of the city, in order to frighten the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, took all the living and dead Spaniards whom they had captured, to Tlaltelulco, which is the market, and, in some lofty towers there, they stripped them and sacrificed them, opening their breasts and taking out their hearts to offer them to the idols. This the Spaniards in Pedro de Alvarado's camp could see from where they were fighting, and in the naked white bodies which they saw sacrificed they recognised that they were Christians; and, although they were saddened and dismayed

Sacrifice of the Spanish Captives

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obeyed his order never to advance without first securing his retreat. Alderete denied that he had ever had any such order, and declared that it was Cortes who had urged the troops forward. Recriminations and censures were thus exchanged, for naturally nobody would accept responsibility for such a calamity; it appears certain that Cortes had not been in favour of the assault, but had allowed his better judgment to be overruled by his companions, who were weary of the daily fighting, and thought they could storm the Tlateloco market-place, and so end the siege.

While gloom reigned in the Spanish camp, there was exultation amongst the Mexicans whose waning hopes of victory were revived by their success. The priests proclaimed that the war-god was appeased by the savour of so many Spanish victims and within eight days would give his faithful a complete victory over the impious invaders. This oracle was published amongst the allies, and shook their wavering faith in the Spaniards; they saw that the city stubbornly held out, they perceived that the strangers were neither invincible nor immortal, and, as the ancient superstitious fear of their gods reasserted itself, tens of thousands quietly detached themselves from the Spanish camp and marched off homewards. Cortes used every effort to hold them and urged that they should at least wait eight days and see whether the prophecy was fulfilled before deciding against him. The Tlascalan general, Chichimecatecle, and Prince Ixtlilxochitl of Texcoco remained steadfast to their sworn allegiance. The latter was naturally an object of peculiar hatred to the Mexicans, who reviled him, and heaped imprecations on him as a renegade from his race, and a traitor to his country. If he felt these taunts, he did not betray his feelings, but day after day joined in the scenes of carnage, facing both danger and obloquy unmoved. For five days there was some respite, the Spaniards nursing their wounds and pre-

by this, they retreated into their camp, having fought very well that day and arrived almost to the market-place which would have been won that day if God, on account of our sins, had not permitted so great a misfortune. We returned to our camp sadly, somewhat earlier than we were accustomed to on other days; also because we heard the brigantines were lost as the Mexicans had fallen on our rear with the canoes, though it pleased God that this should not be true. The brigantines and canoes of our friends had indeed found themselves in tight straits; so much so that a brigantine was almost lost, and the

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paring for a resumption of hostilities, while the Mexicans were engaged in making overtures to win back their faithless subjects and allies.

The situation of the Spaniards was well-nigh desperate, but that of the Mexicans was hardly better, for famine stalked their streets, claiming as many victims as the Spanish cannon, and terribly weakening the defenders of the city. The besiegers tenaciously held their position on the causeways, and, aided by the brigantines, on the lakes, were unceasingly vigilant in maintaining the blockade.

Throughout the siege there were a few Spanish women—some of them described as "wives" of the soldiers—in camp, who displayed scarcely less courage than the men, for, not only did they occupy themselves in the nursing which is women's natural function in wartime, but they even mounted guard to relieve the weary soldiers, who needed rest; and instances are given of their joining in the actual fighting. Cortes had intended leaving all these women at Tlascala, but his proposed order to that effect aroused such opposition, especially among the women themselves who declared that Castilian wives, rather than abandon their husbands in danger, would die with them, that it was never given. Little has been said of the courage and devotion of these obscure heroines, but Herrera has recorded the names of five, Beatriz de Palacios, Maria de Estrada, Juana Martin, Isabel Rodriguez, and Beatriz Bermudez, as meriting honorable mention in the annals of the conquest.

The eight days appointed by the priests for the destruction of the besiegers expired, and the prophecy remained unfulfilled; seeing which the vacillating allies returned to the Spanish camp in large numbers where the politic general received them with his customary imperturbable urbanity, and, after reproaching them for their faithless desertion in a panic of foolish superstition, declared that he pardoned their fault and accepted them once more as vassals of Spain, and his allies.

captain and the master were both wounded, the captain dying within eight days.

That day, and the following night, the people of the city rejoiced greatly with trumpets and kettle-drums so that it seemed the very world was sinking, and they opened all the streets and bridges over the water, as they had them before, and lighted fires, and placed night watchmen at a distance of two bow-shots from our camp; for, as we were all so disordered, and wounded, and without arms, we needed to rest and recuperate ourselves. Meanwhile the enemy had time to send their messengers to many provinces subject to them, telling them how they had obtained a great victory and killed many Christians, and that they would soon finish all of us, and that by no means would they sue for peace with us; and the proofs they carried were the heads of the two horses and some of those Christians they had killed, carrying them about, and showing them wherever it seemed useful, which confirmed the rebels more than ever in their stubbornness. However, lest they should become too proud and divine our weakness, some Spaniards on foot and on horseback, with many of our friends, would go into the city to fight every day, albeit they never could gain more than some of the bridges of the next street before reaching the square.

Two days after our rout, which was already known in all the neighbourhood, the natives of a town called Cuarnaguacar [Cuernavaca], who had been subject to the city but had given themselves for our friends, came to the camp and told me that the people of Marinalco,[1] their neighbours did them much injury and destroyed their fields, and that they also had joined with the large province of Cuisco,[2] and intended to attack them and kill them because they had given themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, and our friends; once the peo-

[1] Malinalco.

[2] Probably Huisuco.

ple of Cuarnaguacar were destroyed, their enemies would then come against us. Although what had passed was still so recent, and we were rather needing to receive than to give help, since they asked it of me with such urgency, I determined to give it to them, although I encountered much opposition, and it was said that in taking people from our camp I was destroying myself. I dispatched eighty foot soldiers and ten horsemen under Captain Andres de Tapia with those who had come to ask our aid, charging him earnestly to do whatever was required for Your Majesty's service and for our security; as he saw the need in which we were, he should spend not more than ten days in going and coming. He left, and reached a small town between Marinalco and Coadnoacad,[1] where he found the enemy expecting him; and he, with the people of Coadnoacad and those he had with him, began his battle on the field, and our forces fought so well that they routed the enemy, pursuing them until they reached Marinalco, which is situated on a very high hill where the horsemen could not approach. Seeing this, they destroyed that part which is in the plain, and returned to our camp within the ten days. In the upper part of this town of Marinalco, there are many fountains of excellent water, a very refreshing thing.

While this captain was absent, some Spaniards on foot and on horseback entered with our friends into the city as far as the large houses which are on the square, to fight, as I have already said; they could not advance further because the enemy had opened the water street which is at the entrance of the square and is very broad and deep; and, on the other side, there was a very large and strong entrenchment, where they fought with one another until night separated them.

A chief of the province of Tascaltecal, called Chichi-

[1] Cuernavaca again though Cortes varies his incorrect spelling.

mecatecle, of whom I have heretofore written that he had bought the timbers that had been prepared in that province for the brigantines, had resided with his people, since the beginning of the war, in the camp of Pedro de Alvarado; and when he saw, after the preceding rout, that the Spaniards did not fight as before, he determined to make an entrance with only his own people. Leaving four hundred of his bowmen at a dangerous broken bridge he had taken, (which had never before happened without our aid), he and his people advanced with great shouts, cheering and naming their province and lord. They fought very bravely that day and there were many wounded and dead on both sides; and those of the city believed that they had trapped them because it is their custom, when their adversaries retire, to follow them with much persistence, although it be without chance of victory, believing that in crossing the water, where it sometimes happens there is a certain danger, they may take revenge on them. To forestall this danger and to provide help, Chichimecatecle had left four hundred bowmen at the water pass, and, while his men were retiring, those of the city suddenly charged them, and the warriors of Tascaltecal threw themselves into the water, and, under the protection of the bowmen, they crossed, leaving the enemy greatly surprised at the resistance they encountered, and at the daring which the Chichimecatecle had displayed.

Exploits of Chicheme-catl

Two days after the Spaniards had returned from fighting in Marinalco, as Your Majesty will have seen in the chapter before the last, there arrived at our camp, ten Indians of the Otumies who had been slaves to the inhabitants of the city, and, as I have said, had given themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, coming every day to help in fighting; and they told me that the lords of the province of Matalcingo, who are their neighbours, made

war upon them, and destroyed their land, burned a town, captured some of the people and were destroying everything they could, intending to come to our camps and attack us, so that those of the city could sally forth and overcome us. We gave credit to most of this, because, each time, for a few days past, that we had entered to fight, the Culuans had threatened us, with the people of this province of Matalcingo, which, though we had not much information, we well knew was large and twenty-five leagues distant from our camp. In the complaint these Otumies made of their neighbours, they gave us to understand that they wanted help, and, although they asked it at a very needy time, confiding in the help of God, and in order to break the wings of those of the city who daily threatened us with these people and hoped for aid, which could only come from them, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, with eighteen horsemen and one hundred foot-soldiers, amongst whom there was only one bowman: he departed with them and the Otumies, our friends; and God knows the danger which attended all who went as well as all who were left. But, as it was necessary to show more courage and valour than ever, and to die fighting, we hid our weakness from friends as well as from foes, and many and many times the Spaniards declared they hoped it might please God to leave them their lives and to see them victorious over the city, even though no other profits should come to them neither in it, nor in any other part of the country; by which the risk and extreme need in which we found ourselves and our lives may be judged.

The alguacil mayor left that day, and slept in a town of the Otumies which is on the frontier of Marinalco, and, the following day, he started very early, arriving at some small hamlets of the said Otumies, which he found deserted, and a good part of them burnt. Advancing more on to the plain, he found near a river bank

many warriors who, having just finished burning another town, retreated when they saw him. On the road, were found many loads of maize and roasted children which they had brought as provisions and which they left behind them when they discovered the Spaniards coming. After crossing a river a little ahead of them in the plain, the enemy began to recover, and the alguacil mayor charged on them with the horsemen and put them to confusion; and they fled on the road straight towards their town of Matalcingo, about three leagues from there, the pursuit lasting until the horsemen had shut them all up in the town. There they awaited the Spaniards and our allies who were killing those who had been stopped and left behind by the horsemen. More than two thousand of the enemy perished in this pursuit. When those on foot and our friends, who were more than sixty thousand, overtook the horsemen, they began to rush towards the town where the enemy made a stand, while the women and children, goods, and chattels, were safe in a fort situated on a very elevated hill near that place. But as our force fell on them suddenly, they forced the warriors also to retire to the fort on that elevation, which was very steep and strong. They burned and sacked the town in a very short time, but the alguacil mayor did not attack the fort, as it was late and also because his men were very tired for they had fought during the entire day. The enemy spent that night in yelling and in making an uproar with their kettle-drums and trumpets.

The next day, in the early morning, the alguacil mayor led all the people to scale the enemy's fort, though fearful of finding himself in difficulties from their resistance. On arriving, however, they found none of the adversaries, and certain of our Indian friends, descending from the elevation, said that there was nobody there and that all the enemy had left at daybreak. In the midst of this, they discovered on all the surrounding plains, a great

number of people, who were Otumies, and the horsemen, believing that they were enemies, galloped towards them and lanced at three or four of them; and as the language of the Otumies is different from that of Culua they did not understand them, except that they threw away their arms and came towards the Spaniards, who even after that lanced three or four. But they understood well enough that this had happened from our men not recognising them. As the enemy did not wait, the Spaniards determined to return to another of their towns which was also hostile; but, seeing such a force come against them, the inhabitants came out peaceably. The alguacil mayor spoke kindly to the chief of that town, and told him that he already knew that I would receive with good will all who came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty although they might be very culpable; that he besought him to speak with those of Matalcingo so that they might come to me of their own choice; he agreed to do this and also to bring those of Marinalco to peace. Thus victorious the alguacil mayor returned to his camp.

First Overtures for Peace

On that day, some Spaniards fought in the city, and the citizens had sent word to ask our interpreter to come, because they desired to discuss peace, which, as it appeared, they wished only on the condition that we should all leave the country. They did this with the object of resting some days and of furnishing themselves with necessaries, although we never overcame their disposition to fight. While engaged in these parleys with the interpreter, our people were very near the enemy with only a broken-down bridge between them, and an old man amongst them in full sight of all very slowly drew from his provision bag certain things which he ate, so as to give us to understand that they were not in want, for we had told them that they would starve to death; and at this our friends assured the Spaniards that the peace

was all a pretence and that they wished to fight. That day, however, no other fighting took place, because the chiefs told the interpreter to call me.

Four days after the alguacil mayor had returned from the province of Matalcingo, the chief of it and those of Marinalco and the province of Quiscon, which is large and important and had also rebelled, came to our camp and asked pardon for the past, offering to serve well; and thus they did and have done until now. While the alguacil mayor was away in Matalcingo, those of the city determined to come at night and fall on the camp of Alvarado. A quarter before dawn, they made the attack, and, when the watchmen on horseback and foot perceived them, they called "*To Arms*," and those who were ready charged on them. When the enemy perceived the horsemen, they threw themselves into the water; in the meantime our people came up and fought them for three hours. When we in the camp heard one of the field pieces firing, fearing they might be routed, we ordered the people to arm themselves and enter the city, so as to thus draw off the attack from Alvarado. As the Indians found the Spaniards so courageous, they decided to return to the city, where we continued to fight during the day.

By this time, those who had been wounded in our rout were already recovered, and the ship had arrived at Villa Rica, belonging to Juan Ponce de Leon,[1] who had formerly been routed in the country or island of Florida. They sent me certain powder and crossbows, of which we stood in very extreme need; and now, thanks to God, all [about here there is not a province which is

[1] A gentleman who first came to San Domingo with Columbus in 1493: he landed on the coast, which he named Florida, in 1512, when sailing under a commission from Don Diego Columbus, governor of San Domingo. Instead of discovering the fountain of perpetual youth he had come to seek, he was wounded in a skirmish with the Indians from which he died in Cuba.

not in our favour. Seeing that the people of the city were so rebellious, and displayed such determination to die as no race had ever shown, I knew not what means to adopt to relieve our dangers and hardships, and to avoid utterly destroying them and their city, which was the most beautiful thing in the world. It was useless to tell them that we would not raise our camps, or that the brigantines would not cease to make war on them, or that we had destroyed those of Matalcingo and Marinalco, and that nowhere in the country was anyone left to help them, or that they could not obtain maize, nor wheat, nor fruit, nor water, nor any provisions from anywhere. The more I spoke of these things, the less sign of yielding did we see in them; rather we found them more courageous than ever, both in their fighting and their scheming. Seeing that things went on in this way, and that already more than forty-five days had been spent in this siege, I determined to take means towards our security and to further straiten the enemy. This latter consisted in our gaining the streets of the city and demolishing all the houses on both sides, so that henceforward we would not go one step ahead without levelling everything, so that which was water should be made into dry land, no matter how much time it took. I called the lords and chiefs of our allies and told them what I had determined, so that they might have their workmen bring their spades and *coas*, which are certain poles which they use, similar to the Spanish hoe. They answered me that they would do this with the best good will, and that it was a very good decision at which they rejoiced greatly, because they perceived that in this way the city would be destroyed, which was what they desired more than anything else in the world.

Three or four days passed in concerting this plan; the people of the city easily divined that we were

planning some mischief against them, and they also, as it afterwards appeared, were arranging what they could for their defence, as we likewise conjectured. Having concerted with our friends that we would attack them by land and water, the next morning, after having heard mass, we took the road to the city, and when we reached the water pass and barricade near the great houses of the square, intending to attack them, the people of the city asked us to be quiet as they wished to sue for peace. I ordered my people to cease fighting, and told them that the lord of the city should come there to speak to me, and arrange the conditions of the peace. After telling me that they had already gone to call him, they detained me for more than an hour, but in truth they did not want peace, as they themselves immediately showed, for, while we were quiet, they began to throw adobes and darts and stones at us. When I saw this, I attacked the barricades and captured them, and on entering the square we found it strewn with large stones to impede the horses moving over it; for generally it is these which do the most fighting. We also found a street barricaded with dry stones, and another filled with stones, so that the horses could not pass through them. During the rest of that day, we filled up the water street which leads out from the square, so that the Indians never opened it again, and thenceforward we began, little by little to destroy the houses and to shut up, and fill up completely, all we had gained on the water. As we were accompanied all day by more than one hundred and fifty thousand warriors, a good deal was accomplished; and thus we returned that day to our camp, and the brigantines and canoes of our friends, after doing much damage to the city returned to rest. The next day we again entered the city in the same order, as far as the enclosure and large court where the towers of the idols

are. I ordered the captains to do nothing else but fill up the water streets and level the dangerous passes we had captured; and as for our friends, some of them should level and burn the houses and others should fight in the customary places, while the horsemen should guard the rear of all. I ascended the highest tower that the Indians might recognise me, for I also knew that they would be much vexed to see me mounted on the tower; and from there I encouraged our friends and gave aid wherever it was necessary, while they were incessantly fighting. Sometimes it was the adversaries who retreated, and sometimes our allies whom three or four horsemen aided and inspired with infinite courage to turn against the enemy.

In this wise and order, we entered the city on the five or six following days, and always at the hour of retreat we would put our allies ahead and post a number of Spaniards in ambush in some of the houses, the horsemen remaining behind and feigning to retreat hastily, so as to bring them out of the square. With these and the ambushes of the foot soldiers we would kill some of them every afternoon with our lances. On one of these days there were seven or eight horsemen in the square, hoping the enemy would come out, but, as they saw that they did not appear, they feigned to retreat, and the enemy, fearing that they would be caught at the corner, as had sometimes happened, stationed themselves by some walls and roofs in an infinite number. As the horsemen, who were eight or nine, charged towards them, the Indians held the entrance of the street from above so that they could not pursue those of the enemy who passed through it; so they were obliged to retire. The enemy, elated by having forced us to retreat, charged very lustily, and were so well on their guard that without themselves being injured they forced the horsemen to retreat, and wounded two horses. This prompted me

to arrange a good ambush, as I will recount hereafter to Your Majesty. The afternoon of that day, we returned to our camp, leaving everything we had gained assured and levelled, and the people of the city very boastful because they believed that we had retired out of fear. That afternoon, I called the alguacil mayor by messenger to come to our camp before daybreak with fifteen of his own and Pedro de Alvarado's horsemen.

The Ambush in the Square

The alguacil mayor arrived the following morning at the camp with fifteen horsemen, and I obtained another twenty-five from those at Cuyoacan, so that there were forty in all. I ordered ten of them to join in the morning with our force, and in conjunction with the brigantines to go in the same order as heretofore to attack the enemy and to destroy and capture everything possible; when the time for them to retire came, I would start with the other thirty horsemen. When the larger part of the city was demolished they should in the mêlée drive the enemy into their entrenchments and water streets, keeping them there until the hour of retiring, when I and the other thirty horsemen would secretly form an ambuscade in the large houses in the square. The Spaniards did as I ordered, and at one o'clock after mid-day I set out with the thirty horsemen, and stationed them in those houses while I went to the city and mounted the high tower as I habitually did. While I was there, some Spaniards opened a sepulchre and found in it more than fifteen hundred *castellanos* worth of articles in gold. At the hour of returning, I ordered that they should begin to withdraw in a compact body, and that from the first moment of leaving the square the horsemen should feign an attack, behaving as though they hardly dared to make it, choosing the time when they saw a great number of people in and about the whole square. The men posted in ambush longed for the hour to arrive,

because they much desired to act their part well, and were already tired of waiting. I then joined them, as the infantry and horsemen began retiring through the square, accompanied by the Indians our friends, who understood all about the ambush. The enemy rushed out, yelling as if they had gained the greatest victory in the whole world, and the nine horsemen feigned to charge them across the square, and then suddenly to fall back; and, when they had done this twice, the enemy acquired such fury that they pressed up to the very croups of the horses and were thus decoyed towards the end of the street where the ambush was laid. When we saw the Spaniards had passed ahead of us, and heard the shot of a gun fired which was the signal agreed upon, we knew that the time to sally forth had arrived; and, with the cry of "Señor Santiago!" we suddenly fell upon them, and rushed forward into the square with our lances, overthrowing and stopping many, which latter our friends, who joined in the pursuit, were able to capture. In this ambush more than five hundred, all of the bravest and most valiant of their principal men were killed, and, that night, our allies supped well, because they cut up all those whom they had killed and captured to eat. Such was the fright and wonder of the enemy at seeing themselves suddenly routed that there was no more shouting the whole afternoon, nor did they dare to show their heads in the streets, nor on the roofs, except where they were entirely protected and safe. About nightfall, the people of the city sent certain slaves to see if we had retired, or what we were doing. As they appeared in the street, some ten or twelve horsemen charged and pursued them, so that none of them escaped.

Such was the consternation of the enemy from this, our victory, that during the rest of the war they never again dared to enter the square when we were retiring, even if only one horseman was there; nor did they ever

dare to come out against an Indian or foot soldier, fearing that another ambush might spring up beneath their feet. The victory God was pleased to give us that day was one of the principal causes why the city was taken sooner, for the natives were dismayed by it and our friends doubly encouraged; so we returned to our camp, intending to hasten on the war, and, until we finished it, not to let a single day pass without entering the city. We suffered no loss that day, except that, during the ambush, some of the horsemen collided with each other, and one was thrown from his mare, which galloped directly towards the enemy who wounded her severely with arrows, and she, seeing the ill-treatment she got, returned to us; and that night she died. Although we grieved exceedingly at it, for the horses and mares gave life to us, our grief was less than had she died in the hands of our enemies, as we feared would happen; had such been the case, their satisfaction would have outweighed their grief for those we had killed. The brigantines and canoes of our friends made great havoc that day in the city without suffering any loss.

Suffering in the City

We already knew that the Indians of the city were much discouraged, and two poor creatures, who came out by night to our camp because they were starving, told us that during the night they came to hunt amongst the houses and search in those parts we had already captured, looking for herbs and wood and roots to eat. Since we had already filled up many of the water streets, and repaired many of the bad places, I determined to enter the city before daybreak, and do all the damage I could. The brigantines left before dawn and I with twelve horsemen and some foot soldiers and our friends, came in suddenly, having first placed spies, who, at daybreak made signs to us in our ambush to come and charge on a vast number of people. But they were of

the most miserable class who had come out to search for something to eat, most of them being unarmed, and women and boys. We did much damage amongst them all over the city, wherever we were able to move about, so that between prisoners and killed they exceeded more than eight hundred, and the brigantines also captured people in canoes who were fishing, making great havoc amongst them. As the captains and chiefs of the city saw us moving about at an unaccustomed hour, they became as frightened as by the recent ambush, and none dared to come and fight with us, so we returned to our camp well satisfied with great spoils and food for our friends.

The next morning, we entered the city, and, as our friends had observed the systematic order we followed in the destruction of it, the multitude which daily came with us was beyond all reckoning. We finished taking the whole street of Tacuba that day and filling up the bad places in it, so that the people from Pedro de Alvarado's camp could communicate with us through the city. We won two other bridges on the principal street leading to the market-place, filling them up, and we burned the houses of the lord of the city, who was a youth of eighteen, called Guatimucin, being the second ruler since the death of Montezuma; and the Indians had many strong places amongst these houses, as they were large and solid and surrounded by water. Two other bridges were also captured in other streets which run near the one leading to the market, and many passes were filled up, so that three of the four quarters of the city were already ours, and the Indians could only retreat to the strongest part of it only, which comprised the houses furthest out in the water.

The following day, which was the feast of the Apostle Santiago [July 25th], we entered the city in the same order as before, following the large street to the market-

place and capturing a broad water street where the enemy was well fortified. We were delayed there for some time; and it was dangerous capturing it, nor were we able to fill it up in the whole of the day (as it was very broad), so that the horsemen could cross to the other side. The Indians, seeing we were all on foot, and that the horsemen had not passed over, attacked us with some fresh troops, many of them very splendid; but, as we turned upon them with our many archers, they retreated towards their barricades and forts, badly wounded with arrows. Besides this, all the Spanish foot soldiers carried their pikes, which I had ordered made after our rout, and which were very useful. Nothing was heard all day on each side of the principal street but the burning and destroying of the houses, which was certainly pitiful to see, but as nothing else could avail we were obliged to follow those tactics. When the people of the city saw such ruin, they encouraged themselves by telling our friends to go on burning and destroying as it was they who would have to rebuild the city in any case, because if they [the Mexicans] were victorious they would make them do it, and if not they would have to rebuild it for us; and it pleased God that this last should turn out to be true, for they are indeed the ones who have to do this work.[1]

Very early on the morning of the next day, we entered the city in the customary order, and, arriving at the water street which we had filled up the day before, found it in the same state we had left it; and, advancing about two bow-shots, we captured two large ditches of water, which had been cut in the same street, and arrived at the small tower of their idols, in which we found certain heads of Christians whom they had killed; a sight which filled us with much commiseration. And from that tower,

[1] The logic of this taunt was verified later, as Cortes observes, for the work of rebuilding the city fell upon the Indian allies who had destroyed it.

the street in which we were, led straight to the causeway of Sandoval's camp, and, on the left side, another street in which water no longer flowed, led to the market; they still held only one against us, nor could we pass it that day, though we fought the Indians stoutly. God, Our Lord, gave us victory every day, and the worst always fell on them. It was late that day when we returned to our camp.

The next day, while preparing to return to the city about nine o'clock in the morning, we observed from our camp that smoke was rising from the two highest towers which were in Tatelulco, or the market-place of the city. This we could not understand, for it seemed something more than the incensing which the Indians usually made to their idols, so we suspected that Pedro de Alvarado's men had arrived there, and, although this was the fact, we could not believe it. Pedro de Alvarado's men certainly behaved very valiantly, for there were many bridges and barricades to capture and the greater part of the enemy always came to defend them; but as he saw that on our side we were hedging the enemy in, he did everything he could to enter the market-place, because their whole strength was centred there. However, he could arrive only within sight of it, and capture those towers and many others which adjoin the same market-place, forming an enclosure almost like that of many of the towers in the city; the horsemen had hard work and were forced to retreat with their horses wounded, and thus Pedro de Alvarado and his people returned to his camp. We could not, that day, capture a bridge and water street which still remained to be taken in order to reach the market-place, without filling up and levelling all the bad places, and on retiring they pressed us very hard, although at their cost.

We again entered the city on the morning of the following day, and, encountering no obstacle before reach-

ing the market-place, except a water course and its barricade near the small tower of which I have spoken, we attacked it, and the standard bearer and two or three other Spaniards threw themselves into the water, so the defenders immediately abandoned the pass, which we filled and made passable for the horsemen. While we were repairing it, Pedro de Alvarado arrived by the same street with four horsemen, to our mutual satisfaction, for this was the way to speedily finish the war. Pedro de Alvarado left a file of guards in the rear, not only for the purpose of preserving what had been won, but also for his protection, and, as the pass was quickly repaired, I, with some horsemen, went to view the market-place, and ordered that the others should not advance beyond that pass. Afterwards we reconnoitred the square for a short time, inspecting its arcades whose roofs were full of the enemy. As the square was very large, and they saw the horsemen moving about there, they did not dare to attack. I ascended that large tower which adjoins the market-place, in which, and in others also, we found the heads of the Christians whom they had killed and offered to their idols, as well as those of the Indians of Tascaltecal, our friends between whom and the Mexicans there was a very ancient and cruel feud. I saw from that tower that we had without doubt captured seven-eighths of the city, and, seeing that such a number of the enemy could not possibly hold out in such straits, chiefly because those houses left them were so small and each built over the water, and above all because of the great famine prevailing amongst them, for we found the gnawed roots and bark of trees in the streets, I determined to suspend fighting for a day and devise some measure to save this multitude of people from perishing. The harm done them caused me such compassion and distress that I continually importuned them with offers of peace, but they answered that in no

wise would they surrender and that only one man being left he would die fighting, and that of all they possessed we could never obtain anything for they would burn it and throw it into the water whence it would never more appear. Not wishing to return evil for evil, I dissembled, and refrained from fighting.

The Catapult

As very little powder was left to us, we had in the last fifteen days discussed somewhat about making a catapult;[1] and, though there was no first-class master-workman who knew how to do it, some carpenters offered to make a small one. Although I always believed that we would not succeed in this work, I consented that they should make it, and, in those days when we had the Indians cor-

[1] A soldier called Sotelo, native of Seville, who claimed to have seen much service in Italy, and to know all about the construction of engines of warfare, proposed to Cortes to make this catapult. As Bernal Diaz says, he was eternally talking about the wonderful military machines he could build, with which he promised to destroy in two days the remaining quarter of the city, where Quauhtemotzin held out. The commander consented to the trial, and stone, lime, timber, cables, and all the necessary materials, were furnished, together with carpenters, and masons, to carry out Sotelo's instructions. The machine was erected on the platform of masonry known as the *Mumuztli*, a sort of theatre which stood in the square, and the process of its construction was watched with exultant expectations by the Indian allies, who foresaw the wholesale destruction of their enemies by means of the mysterious machine. They indulged in jubilant prophecies, and called on the Mexicans to observe the growth of the engine destined to accomplish their overthrow. The Mexicans were equally impressed by the strange monster, and watched its building with the feelings of one in the condemned cell, who hears the workmen building the scaffold on which he is to perish at dawn. The day of the trial (August 6th) arrived, and a huge stone was fired which instead of flying over into the Indian quarter where it was aimed, shot up into the air, and fell back into exactly the place from whence it departed. Cortes was furious with Sotelo, and ashamed of the failure in the presence of the gazing multitude: the luckless inventor was in disgrace, and the catapult remained one of the standing jokes in the army. Infusing some gaiety into the company this invention may be said to have served some good purpose, even though not exactly the one expected of it.

nered, they finished it and took it to the market-place to station it on a sort of square theatre which stands in the middle, and which is built of stone and mortar and is about fourteen feet in height, and about thirty paces long from one corner to the other; when they celebrated their plays and festivals, the performers placed themselves on this where all the people in the market both above and below the arcades could see them. After the catapult was brought there, three or four days were occupied in placing it, and the Indians our friends threatened those of the city with it, telling them that with this engine we would kill them all. Although no other result was obtained (as indeed there was none) except the fright it caused, from which we thought the enemy would surrender, it would have been sufficient; the deception was a double one because neither the carpenters fulfilled their design nor did the defenders of the city (although they were much frightened) take any step to surrender, while I disguised the failure of the catapult by pretending that moved by compassion, we forbore to kill them all.

The next day, after placing the catapult, we returned to the city, and, as three or four days had passed without any fighting, we found the streets by which we passed full of women and children and other miserable people, who came out so emaciated and thin, that it was the greatest pity in the world to behold them, so I ordered our friends not to hurt them. But, none of the warriors appeared where any harm could reach them, though we saw them on the tops of their roofs, covered with the blankets they wear, and without weapons. I had them required that day to make peace, but their replies were inconclusive. As they occupied us most of the day with this, I sent them word that I intended to attack them and that they should withdraw all their people, otherwise I would permit our friends to kill them. They said they

desired peace, and I answered them that I did not see amongst them their lord with whom I must treat, but when he came for that purpose I would give him a safe conduct and we would discuss peace. Seeing it was all mockery, and that they were prepared to fight with us, I ordered Pedro de Alvarado, after having admonished them many times and in order to reduce them to extreme necessity, to enter with all his people through a large quarter which the enemy held, and in which there were more than one thousand houses; and I, with those of our camp, came on foot from another side, because we could not avail ourselves of the horsemen. The fight between us and our enemies was very stubborn, but finally we won that whole quarter, and, such was the slaughter committed upon our enemies, that between killed and wounded there were more than twelve thousand.

Our allies handled the enemy most cruelly, for they would in no wise spare any life, although they were reproved and punished by us.

We returned next day to the city, and I ordered that no fighting should take place nor any harm be done to the enemy, who, when they saw such a multitude of people, and their own vassals and subjects, arrayed against them, and saw their extreme necessity, which left them not even a place to stand, save upon the bodies of their own dead, moved by the desire to escape such a great misfortune, asked us why we did not put an end to them; then suddenly they said to call me as they wished to speak to me. All the Spaniards wished that this war might finally end, and, pitying such misery, they rejoiced, believing that the Indians wanted peace; so they came gladly to call and importune me to come to a barricade where certain chiefs wished to speak to me. I knew that little profit would come of my going, but I determined at all events to go, although I knew their not surrendering all depended on the sovereign and some

three or four other chiefs of the city, for the others, dead or alive, all desired to be out of it. And when I arrived at the barricade, they told me that, as they held me to be the son of the sun, and as the sun in such brief period as a day and a night, made the circuit of the entire world, I ought likewise to finish killing them speedily and save them from so much suffering, because they wished to die and go to heaven to their Ochilobus,[1] who was awaiting to give them rest; this being the idol which they hold in the greatest reverence. I said many things in reply to persuade them to surrender, and nothing availed with them, although they perceived in us greater wishes and offers for peace than had ever been shown to any other vanquished, for with the help of Our Lord we were the victors.

Renewed Proposals of Peace.

Having reduced the enemy to the last extremity, as may be gathered from what has been said, and in order to win them from their evil intention, which was their determination to die, I spoke to one of their noble chiefs, the uncle of Don Fernando, lord of Tesaico, who had been captured fighting in the city, and whom we held prisoner. Although badly wounded I asked him if he wished to return to the city, and he answered me, "yes," and, when we entered it the next day, I sent him, with certain Spaniards, who delivered him to the people of the city; and, to their chief, I had spoken exclusively in order that he might talk to the sovereign and the other chiefs about peace, and he promised to do everything that was possible. The people of the city received him with much deference as a nobleman, and, when they took him before Quatamucin, their sovereign, and he began to speak of peace, it is said they immediately ordered him to be killed and sacrificed, and the answer

[1] Huitzilopotchli, also spelled Huitchilopochtli: the god of war whose statue stood in the great teocalli.

we were awaiting they gave us with great yells, saying that they wanted nothing but death. They began to discharge arrows and stones at us, and fought us very stoutly, so much so that they killed a horse with a dagger which one of them had taken from one of our friends; but finally they paid dearly for it, because many of them perished, and thus we returned that day to our camp.

The next day, we again entered into the city, and our adversaries were so reduced that an infinite number of our friends ventured to remain there during the night; having come in sight of the enemy we did not care to fight with them, but only moved about in their city, because every hour and every moment we believed that they would come to surrender. In order to persuade them, I rode near one of the barricades and called certain chiefs, who were behind them, whom I already knew, and said to them that since they saw that everything was lost, and recognised that, if I wished, none of them would escape why was it that Quatamucin their lord did not come to speak with me; that I promised to do him no harm, and if he and they wished for peace they would be well received and well treated by me. I gave them other reasons, with which I provoked them to many tears; and, weeping, they replied that they well recognised their error and perdition, and that they would go and speak to their lord and return speedily with the answer, asking me not to go away from there. So they went away, returning within a short space to tell me that, inasmuch as it was already late their lord had not come, but that at noon on the following day he would certainly come to speak with me in the market-place; so we returned to our camp. I ordered that on the next day that high square platform which stood in the middle of the market-place should be prepared for the lords and princes of the city, and that they should likewise prepare a repast for them; and this was done accordingly.

We went into the city early the next morning, and I ordered the people to be prepared in case the inhabitants intended to perpetrate any treachery, so that we might not be surprised; I also cautioned Pedro de Alvarado who was there. When we reached the market-place, I sent word to Quatamucin, telling him that I was waiting for him, but, it appeared he had determined not to come, but sent five of his nobles or chief lords of the city whose names, as it is not worth while, I do not give here. They came and told me that their lord had sent them to pray me to pardon him if he did not come, that he was greatly afraid to appear before me, and also that he was ill and that they had come hither to hear my commands, which they would obey; although the sovereign did not appear we rejoiced a great deal that these chiefs had come, as it seemed to us that here was now a way to reach a speedy end of the whole business. I received them with a show of gladness, and immediately ordered meat and drink to be given them, in partaking of which they showed their craving and need for it. When they had eaten, I told them to speak to their lord to persuade him not to be afraid, for I promised him that no annoyance would be offered him if he appeared before me, nor would he be detained, but that, without his presence, no good understanding could be reached, nor agreement made. I ordered some refreshments to be taken to him, and they promised me to do all that was in their power; and thus they departed. Two hours afterwards, they returned, and brought me some fine mantles of cotton, such as they use, and they told me that Quatamucin their lord would by no means come, and that he refused to discuss it. I again repeated to them that I did not know why he mistrusted me, inasmuch as he saw that to them whom I knew to be the principal promoters of the war, and who had sustained it, I nevertheless extended good treatment, allowing them to come and go in security without being

in any way annoyed, and I besought them to speak again to him, and to urge his coming because it was for his advantage. They answered me that they would do so, and bring me the answer the next day; and thus they left and we also withdrew to our camp.

The next day, those chiefs came to our camp very early in the morning and asked me to come to the square of the market of the city, because their sovereign wished to speak to me. Believing it was true, I mounted my horse and awaited him where it had been agreed, for more than three or four hours, but he never chose to appear before me. As I saw the mockery, and it had already become late, and that neither the other messengers nor the lord came, I sent for the Indians, our friends, who had been left at the entrance of the city almost a league from where we were, whom I had ordered not to advance beyond there because the people of the city had asked me that, whilst treating for peace none of them should be inside it. Neither they nor those of Pedro de Alvarado's camp delayed in coming, and, when they arrived, we attacked some of the barricades and water streets which they held, no other strong force being left them, and we charged amongst them ourselves, as well as our friends, according as we pleased. Before leaving the camp, I had ordered that Gonzalo de Sandoval should proceed with the brigantines to the place where the Indians had fortified themselves in the houses, thus holding them surrounded, but not attacking them until he should observe that we began to fight; in such manner that, holding them thus surrounded, they had no place to go except amongst the dead, and on the roofs which were left them. For this cause, they neither had, nor procured, arrows, nor darts, nor stones, with which to hurt us. Our friends accompanied us, armed with swords and shields, and such was the slaughter done that day on water and on land, that with prisoners taken

they numbered in all more than forty thousand men; and such were the shrieks and the weeping of the women and children that there was none whose heart did not break; and we had more trouble in preventing our allies from killing and inflicting tortures than we had in fighting with the Indians, for no such inhuman cruelty as the natives of these parts practice was ever seen amongst any people. Our allies obtained very great plunder, which we could not prevent, because we were about nine hundred Spaniards, and they more than one hundred and fifty thousand men, and no attention or diligence was sufficient to prevent them from robbing, although we did everything possible to stop it. One of the reasons why I refused to go to extremes in those previous days was that, by taking them by assault, they would probably throw what they had into the lake, and if they did not do so our allies would steal everything they found; and, for this reason, I feared that but a small part of the great wealth existing in the city, as shown by what I had before obtained for Your Highness, would be secured for Your Majesty. As it was already late, and we could no longer endure the stench of the dead which had lain for many days in those streets (the most pestilential thing in the world), we returned to our camps.

That afternoon, I arranged that, as on the next day following we should again enter the city, three large field pieces should be prepared which we would take to the city, because, as I feared that the enemy were so compact that they could not turn round, the Spaniards in charging might be crushed by mere numbers, and therefore I wanted to do them some damage with the field pieces in order to force them out towards us. I ordered the alguacil mayor likewise to be prepared to enter, the next day, with the brigantines, through the canals of a large lake extending amongst some houses

where the canoes of the city were all gathered; and there were already so few houses left where they might shelter that the lord of the city, with certain of the chiefs, had placed himself in a canoe, not knowing what to do with themselves. Thus we planned our entrance on the morning of the following day.

When day had dawned, I had our whole force prepared, and the large field pieces brought out; and I had, the day before, ordered Pedro de Alvarado to await me in the square of the market-place, and not to begin fighting until I arrived. All being assembled, and the brigantines ready for action, behind the houses on the water, where the enemy were gathered, I ordered that, on hearing a musket-shot, the land force should enter the small part which was still to be captured, and force the enemy towards the water where the brigantines would be awaiting them; and I cautioned them particularly to look after Quatamucin, and to endeavour to take him alive, because then the war would stop. I mounted the top of a roof, and, before the fight began, I spoke with some of the chiefs of the city whom I knew, and asked them why their lord did not come, seeing that they were in such straits, and I said they ought not to be the cause of all perishing; and told them to call him, saying that nobody need be afraid; and it seemed that two of those chiefs went to call him. After a short time, they returned with one of the highest chiefs of all of them, who was called Ciguacoacin,[1] captain and governor of them all, whose counsel was followed in everything concerning the war. I showed a very good disposition towards him, so that he might be reassured and have no fears, and finally he told me that the sovereign would in no way appear before me, and that he rather preferred to die where he was, and that he himself was much grieved at this

The Fall of Mexico

[1] Chihuacoatl.

decision but that I could do as I pleased. Recognising by this his determination, I told him to return to his own people, and that he and they might prepare themselves, as I was determined to attack them, and finish destroying them; and so it happened. More than five hours had passed in these parleyings, and the inhabitants of the city were all treading on the dead, others in the water were swimming, and others drowning themselves in the large lake where the canoes were collected. Such was the plight in which they were, that no understanding could conceive how they could endure it; and an infinite number of men, women, and children kept coming towards us, who, in their haste, pushed one another back into the water and were drowned amidst the multitude of dead. It appears they had perished to the number of more than fifty thousand, from the salt water which they drank, or from starvation, and pestilence. All these bodies, (in order that we should not understand their extremity), were neither thrown into the water lest the brigantines might come across them, nor were they thrown outside their boundary, lest we should see them about the city; and thus, in the streets they occupied, were found heaps of dead, so that nobody could step without trampling them. As the people of the city came towards us, I ordered Spaniards to be stationed in all the streets, to prevent our allies from killing those unhappy creatures, who were beyond number; and I also ordered the captains of our allies not to allow in any way those fugitives to be killed, but, as they were so many, it was not possible to prevent it that day, so more than fifteen thousand persons were massacred. Meanwhile, some of the chiefs and warriors of the city were brought to bay on some roofs and in the water, where they could no longer stop, or hide from us all their disasters and their weakness which had become very apparent; and, seeing that the afternoon was coming on us, and that they would not

surrender, I had two large field pieces directed against them to see whether they would surrender then, because they would suffer greater damage by our giving permission to our friends to attack them, than by those two field pieces, which caused some destruction. As this also brought no result, I ordered the signal of the musket to be fired, whereupon the corner they still held was immediately taken, and those who were in it were forced into the water, and others who had not fought surrendered. The brigantines swiftly entered that lake, and broke into the midst of the fleet of canoes, and the warriors no longer ventured to fight.

It pleased God that the captain of a brigantine, called Garci Holguin, overtook a canoe in which there were some distinguished people, and, as he had two or three cross-bowmen in the prow of the brigantine, and was crossing in the front of the canoe, they signalled to him not to shoot because their sovereign was there. The canoe was quickly captured, and they took Quatamucin,[1] and the lord of Tacuba, and the other chiefs who were with him;

August 13, 1521

[1] Quauhtemotzin, seeing that escape was hopeless, stood up in the canoe saying: "I am the King of Mexico and of this country; take me to Malintzin. I ask only that my wife and children and the women be spared." Some twenty persons were with him, all of whom Holguin brought back to the city. There is little to add to what Cortes here says about what passed on that historic occasion, except that he gave orders that the Princess Tecuichpo, youngest daughter of Montezuma, recently married to her cousin Quauhtemotzin should receive every consideration. Humboldt, commenting on Quauhtemotzin's choice of instant death, commends the unfortunate young sovereign's conduct in the following terms: "*Ce trait est digne du plus beau temps de la Grèce et de Rome. Sous toutes les zones, quelle que soit la couleur des hommes, le langage des âmes fortes est le même lorsqu'elles luttent contre le malheur*" (*Essai Politique*, p. 192, 4to ed.). The captive monarch was not deceived by the suave manners and honied words of his captor, and his forebodings were realised, when, a few days later, upon his protesting that there was no treasure left in the city, Cortes consented to his torture to force him to speak. Bernal Diaz seeks to excuse Cortes's part in this unworthy proceeding. It may be said in

and the said captain, Garci Holguin,[1] immediately brought the said sovereign of the city and the other chief prisoners to the terrace where I was, which was near the lake. When I invited them to sit down, not wishing to show any rigour, he approached me and said to me in his language that he had done all that on

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extenuation that he yielded to the angry clamours of disappointed soldiers, and the insinuation that he had arranged with Quauhtemotzin to conceal the treasure so as later to appropriate it for himself The custodian of the royal fifth, Aldarete, seems to have insisted on the torture. The king bore the pain unflinchingly and rebuked his fellow sufferer who groaned aloud, saying: "Do you think I am taking my pleasure in my bath?" His feet were almost burned off, and he remained a cripple until his death. The anniversary of his capture and the fall of the city were celebrated as a public holiday all during the period of Spanish rule in Mexico, but the Republic has abolished this observance. The eleventh and last of the Aztec sovereigns was the son of Ahuitzotl; he succeeded Cuitlahuatzin and married his widow Tecuichpo. He was a young man of great personal bravery and energy, in all things the opposite of his superstitious uncle Montezuma. He worked indefatigably to win allies, organise an effective defence, and save the tottering kingdom and city; he galvanised the timid into something like courage, confirmed the waverers, and encouraged the patriots; large stores of arms and provisions were laid in, the useless, aged men, and women and children, were sent off to safe places in the mountains, while the city was filled with warriors. The kings of Texcoco and Tlacopan joined in these plans, co-operating with their fellow sovereign. Had like zeal and harmony existed a year earlier Cortes and his men would never have reached the capital, save as victims to be offered to Huitzilopochtli. Quauhtemotzin arrived too late. Nothing could ward off the oncoming disaster. The powerful states of Tlascala, Cholula, and others, had openly gone over to the Spaniards, blind to the inevitable destruction they were preparing for themselves; the allies of Mexico were doubtful and faint-hearted,—some of them merely neutrals, awaiting the issue to declare for the victor. Never did prince die for duty's sake, choosing death with open eyes and making a last stand for a forlorn cause, more nobly than did the heroic Quauhtemotzin. His captivity and death are noted in the Fifth Letter.

[1] While the brigantine with the royal captain and his fellow prisoners was returning across the lake, Sandoval came on board and demanded that Quauhtemotzin be delivered to him, as he was commander of that division of the fleet, but Holguin claimed the honour

his part he was bound to do to defend himself and his people, until he was reduced to that state, and that I might now do with him as I chose; and placing his hand on a dagger which I wore he bade me stab him with it and kill him. I encouraged him, and told him not to be afraid; and this lord having been made prisoner, the war immediately ceased, which God Our Lord was pleased to bring to its end on this day, the Feast of San Hipolito, which was the 13th of August in the year 1521. So that from the day when we laid the siege to the city, which was the 30th of May of the said year, until it was taken, seventy-five days passed, in which Your Majesty may perceive the hardships, dangers, and cruelties, which these, your vassals, suffered, and in which they so exposed themselves that their deeds will bear testimony of them. In all these seventy-five days of the siege, none passed without more or less fighting.

On the day of the imprisonment of Quatamucin, and of the capture of the city, we returned to camp, having gathered the spoils found that day, and given thanks to Our Lord for the signal mercy and the much wished for victory He had granted us.[1] I remained in the

of the capture, and refused to yield to his superior. The dispute which ensued, delayed matters, but Cortes who was informed of the dissension, sent Luis Marin and Francisco Lugo with peremptory orders to cease wrangling, and bring the prisoners to him.

Bernal Diaz relates that, afterwards, the commander called the two claimants, and cited to them, by way of example, the incident from Roman history of the capture of Jugurtha and the dispute between Marius and Sylla as to the honour of that feat, which was productive of civil wars which devastated the state. He calmed them with the assurance that the circumstance should be fully laid before the Emperor, who would decide which of the two should have the action emblazoned in his arms. Two years later, the imperial decision was given, and ignored both the contestants, granting instead to Cortes himself the device of seven captive kings, linked with a chain and representing Montezuma, Quauhtemotzin, and the rulers of Texcoco, Tlapocan, Iztapalapan, Coyohuacan, and Matolzingo.

[1] See Appendix at close of this Letter.

camp for three or four days, and afterwards we came to the city of Cuyoacan where I have remained until now, providing for the good order and government and pacification of these parts. Having collected the gold and other things, we had them melted, with the approbation of Your Majesty's officials, and what was melted amounted to one hundred and thirty thousand *castellanos*, of which one fifth was given to the treasury of Your Majesty, besides one fifth of other duties belonging to Your Majesty, such as slaves and other things, as will be more extensively seen from the account of all belonging to Your Majesty, which will go signed with our names. The remaining gold was distributed amongst myself and the Spaniards, according to the conduct, service, and quality of each. Besides the said gold, there were certain made pieces, and jewels of gold, of which the best was given to the treasurer of Your Majesty.

Amongst the plunder which was obtained from the said city, many bucklers of gold were found; plumes, and feather work, and things so marvellous that they cannot be described in writing, nor can they be comprehended without being seen. And being such as they are, it seemed to me they should not be divided but should all be placed at the disposition of Your Majesty, for which purpose I assembled all the Spaniards, and besought them to approve of all these things being sent to Your Majesty, and that the shares belonging to them and me should be placed at Your Majesty's disposition, which they rejoiced in doing with much good will. They and I send them for Your Majesty's acceptance by the procurators whom the council of this New Spain has deputed.

As the city of Temixtitan was so important, and so renowned throughout these parts, it seems it came to the knowledge of the lord of a very great province, seventy leagues distant from Temixtitan, called Mechua-

can,[1] how we had destroyed and desolated it, and, considering the strength and grandeur of the said city, it seemed to the lord of that province that, inasmuch as it could not defend itself, there was nothing which could resist us. So, from fear or whatever cause he chose, he sent certain messengers, who, through the interpreters of his language, told me on his part, that their lord had learned that we were vassals of a great ruler, and that, with my approval, he and his people desired to become vassals and have friendship with us. I answered that it was true that we were all of us the vassals of that great ruler, who was Your Majesty, and that we would make war upon those who refused likewise to be so, and that their lord and they had done very well. As I had received news some short time since of the South Sea, I also inquired of them whether it could be reached through their country; and as they answered me affirmatively, I prayed them to take with them two Spaniards, whom I would give them, so that I might inform Your Majesty about that sea and their province. They replied that they were glad to do so with much good will, but that, to reach the sea, they would have to pass through the country of a great lord, with whom they were at war, and for this reason they could not now reach the sea. The messengers from Mechuacan remained here with me three or four days, and I made the horsemen skirmish for them, in order that they might describe it, and, having given them certain jewels, they and the two Spaniards set out for the said province of Mechuacan.

As I said in the foregoing chapter, Most Powerful Lord,

[1] Michoacan was an independent kingdom, peopled by a different race from the Mexicans, and speaking a different language, though it shared to some degree the manners, customs, and civilisation of Anahuac: the chief city was Pazuaro on the lake of the same name. There was an almost permanent state of hostilities between the Tarasque (tribal name of the natives of Michoacan) and Aztec nations.

I had obtained a short time ago information of another sea to the south, and had learned that, in two or three different directions, it was twelve or fourteen days' journey from here. I was very much concerned because it seemed to me that in discovering it a great and signal service would be rendered to Your Majesty, especially as all who have any knowledge or experience of the navigation in the Indies have held it to be certain that, with the discovery of the South Sea in these parts, many islands rich in gold, pearls, precious stones, spices, and other unknown and admirable things would be discovered: and this has been and is affirmed by persons of learning and experience in the science of cosmography. With this desire, and wishing to render Your Majesty this most singular and admirable service, I dispatched four Spaniards, two through certain provinces, and the other two through certain others; and, having first informed myself of the routes they were to take, and giving them guides from amongst our friends, they departed. I ordered them not to stop until they had reached the sea, and, upon discovering it, to take actual and corporeal possession of it in the name of Your Majesty.

Expeditions to the Pacific Ocean

The first travelled about one hundred and thirty leagues through many beautiful and fair provinces without encountering any hindrance, and arrived at the sea, and took possession of it, in sign of which they placed crosses on the coast of it. Some days afterwards, they returned with an account of the said discovery, and informed me very minutely of everything, bringing me some of the natives of the said sea [coast] and also very good samples from the gold mines, which they found in some of those provinces through which they passed; I send these, with the other samples of gold, to Your Majesty. The other two Spaniards were somewhat longer, because they travelled about one hundred and fifty leagues through

other parts until they reached the sea, of which they likewise took possession. They brought me a full description of the coast, and, with them, came some natives of it. I received them and the others graciously, and they, having been informed of Your Majesty's great power, and given some presents, returned very contented to their country.

In the other account, Most Catholic Lord, I told Your Majesty, how, when these Indians routed and expelled me from the city of Temixtitan the first time, all the provinces subject to the city rebelled against the service of Your Majesty, and made war upon us; and, by this account, Your Majesty may seehow we reduced to Your Royal service almost all the provinces which had rebelled. Certain provinces on the coast of the North Sea at ten, fifteen, and thirty leagues' distance from the said city of Temixtitan, had revolted and rebelled, and their natives had treacherously killed certainly more than one hundred Spaniards who had thought themselves safe. I could not possibly proceed against them before the conclusion of the war, so, after I had dispatched those Spaniards who had first discovered the South Sea, I determined to send Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, with thirty-five horsemen, two hundred Spaniards, some of our allies, and some of the chiefs and natives of Temixtitan, to this province, which we called Tatactetelco and Tuxtepeque and Guatuxco and Aulicaba; and, having been instructed how to conduct this expedition, he began his preparations for it.

At this season, the lieutenant, whom I had left in the town of La Segura de la Frontera, in the province of Tepeaca, came to this city of Cuyoacan, and informed me how some of the natives of that province and other neighbouring ones, vassals of Your Majesty, were troubled by the natives of the provinces of Guaxacaque [Oaxaca] who made war on them because they were our

friends, and, besides it being necessary to correct this evil, it was well to secure that province of Guaxacaque, because it was on the road to the South Sea, and to pacify it would be very advantageous as well for the aforesaid as for other reasons, which I will hereafter state to Your Majesty. The said lieutenant told me that he had privately received information respecting that province, and that we could subjugate it with a small force, because, while I was in the camp against Temixtitan, he had gone there, as those of Tepeaca had urged him to make war upon the natives of it, but, not having taken more than twenty or thirty Spaniards they had forced him to return, less leisurely than he would have wished. Having heard his relation I gave him twelve horsemen and eight Spaniards, and the said alguacil mayor and the lieutenant left this city of Guaxacaque on the 15th October, 1521.

When they reached the province of Tepeaca, they there made their review, and each departed on his conquest. The alguacil mayor wrote to me five days later that he had arrived at the province of Guatuxco, and that, although he had much apprehension that he would find himself in straits with the enemy as they were very skilful in war and had many forces in the country, it had pleased Our Lord that he should be received peaceably; and that, although he had not reached the other provinces he felt sure that all the natives of them would offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty. Fifteen days later, other letters of his arrived in which he reported to me that he had advanced, and that the whole of the country was already at peace, and that it seemed to him it would be well to settle in the most accessible parts and thus make sure of it, as we had already discussed many times before, and for me to decide what should be done in the matter. I wrote, thanking him very much for what he had done on his expedition in the service of Your Majesty, telling him that all he reported about settling

was approved by me, and I sent him word to establish a town of Spaniards in the province of Tuxtepeque, and to call it Medellin,[1] I sent the appointment of alcaldes and municipal officials, all of whom I charged to look after Your Majesty's service and the good treatment of the natives. The Lieutenant of Segura de la Frontera departed with his people for the province of Guaxaca with many friendly warriors from that neighbourhood, and, although the natives of that province set themselves to resist, and fought two or three times very stoutly against him, they finally surrendered peacefully without sustaining any damage; he wrote very minutely respecting all this, informing me that the country was very good, and rich in mines, and he sent me a very remarkable sample of gold from it, which I also forward to Your Majesty; and he remained in the said province awaiting my commands.

Rebuilding of Mexico

Having taken measures for the accomplishment of these two conquests, and having heard of the good success of them, and seeing how I had already peopled three towns with Spaniards and that a number of them still remained with me in this city, I debated where to establish another town within the circuit of the lakes; for it was needed for the greater security and peace of all these parts. Considering also that the city of Temixtitan, which was a thing so renowned and had made itself so important and memorable, it seemed to us that it was well to rebuild it, for it was all destroyed. I distributed the lots to those who offered themselves as householders, and I appointed the alcaldes and municipal officers in the name of Your Majesty, as is customary in your kingdoms; and, while the houses were being built, we agreed to continue living in this city of Cuyoacan, where we are at present. In the four or five months since the

[1] Named after Cortes's birthplace in Estremadura.

rebuilding of the said city of Temixtitan was begun it is already very beautiful, and Your Majesty may believe that each day it will become nobler, so that as it was before the head and mistress of all these provinces, so it will be henceforward; it is being and will be so built that the Spaniards will be perfectly strong and safe, and supreme lords of the natives, secure from any fear of being assailed by them.

In the meantime, the chief of the province of Tecoantepeque, which is near the South Sea where the two Spaniards discovered it, sent me certain notables by whom he offered himself as vassal of Your Majesty, and made me a present of certain jewels, pieces of gold, and feather work, all of which was delivered to the treasurer of Your Majesty; I thanked the messengers for what they told me on behalf of their chief, and I gave them certain presents which they took and returned very happy.

At this season, those two Spaniards returned from the province of Mechuacan, whence the messengers had come from that chief, and told me that the South Sea could be reached by that way, except that it had to be done through the country of a chief who was his enemy. A brother of the chief of Mechuacan came with the two Spaniards, and other chiefs and servants with him, exceeding two thousand persons, whom I received, showing great love towards them; and they gave me on the part of the chief of the said province, who is called Calcucin, a present for Your Majesty of shields of gold, weighing [*word missing*] marks, and many other things which were delivered to Your Majesty's treasurer. To show them our customs, and let them report to their chief, I had all the horsemen ride to the square, where they manœuvred and skirmished, the foot soldiers marching in file, and the musketeers firing their muskets and firing with the artillery against the tower. The chiefs were all dread-

fully frightened to see the effect it made, and to see the horses manœuvring; then I had them taken to see the destruction and desolation of the city of Temixtitan, and they were astonished on beholding it and its strength and its fortress, situated as it was in the water. After four or five days, I gave them for their chief many such things as they esteemed, and others for themselves, so they departed very happy and satisfied.

I have heretofore made relation to Your Majesty about the river of Panuco, which is fifty or sixty leagues down the coast from the city of Vera Cruz, where the ships of Francisco de Garay had gone two or three times and received a good deal of hurt from the natives of the said river on account of the little tact which the captains who had been sent there had shown in the traffic they attempted to establish with the Indians. Afterwards, when I perceived that on the whole coast of the South Sea there was a lack of harbours, and that none was equal to the harbour of that river, and also because those natives, after coming to me to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, are making war against the vassals of Your Majesty, our friends, I felt it very necessary to send a captain there with a force to pacify all that province, and, if the country was a likely one for settlement, to establish a town on that river, so that the entire neighbourhood might be assured. Although we were few and scattered in three or four places, from which reason there was some opposition to taking more people from here, nevertheless, both in order to help our friends, and because, after the taking of the city of Temixtitan, ships had arrived bringing some people and horses, I prepared twenty-five horsemen and one hundred and fifty foot soldiers to go with their captain to the said river.

While engaged in dispatching this captain, they wrote to me from Vera Cruz that a ship had arrived in its port,

in which there came Cristobal de Tapia,[1] inspector of the foundries in the island of Hispaniola. I received a letter from him the next day afterwards, in which he made known to me that his coming to this country was for the purpose of taking charge of its government by order of Your Majesty; for this purpose he said he had brought the royal provisions, but would in no wise present them until we met, which he desired should happen immediately. As his animals had been fatigued at sea, he had not begun his journey and he prayed me to give orders how we might see each other, either by his coming hither or my going to the sea-coast. Immediately I received his letter, I answered it, saying that I rejoiced at his arrival, and that nobody could have come provided with Your Majesty's orders for holding the government of these parts whom I would receive with more satisfaction, not only on account of our mutual acquaintance, but also as fellow neighbours and early settlers in the island of Hispaniola.

Arrival of Cristobal de Tapia

Since the pacification of these parts was not so complete as it should be, and any novelty would disquiet the natives, I besought Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, commissary of the Cruzada,[2] (who accompanied us in all

[1] When the news of Narvaez's summary treatment of the commissioner from the *audiencia* of Hispaniola, Ayllon, reached Spain, proceedings were begun against him, but the Bishop of Burgos, always active in Velasquez's interests, secured their suspension until fuller information might be had, and also the release of Narvaez from the prison in Vera Cruz, where Cortes had confined him. Cristobal de Tapia, an inspector of the royal smelting operations in Hispaniola was therefore despatched to Vera Cruz, with full powers to deal with the matter; he was hardly the man for the mission, and was as little able to cope with Cortes as Narvaez had been.

[2] He was a Franciscan friar, empowered to administer the *Bulas de la Cruzada*. The indulgences provided by such bulls were granted on the usual conditions required for obtaining an indulgence, and were applicable to the living and the dead. This usage originated, as the title indicates, with the Crusades, and after it had fallen into

our hardships and well knew the state of things here, making himself so useful in Your Majesty's service that we had availed ourselves of his devotion and advice), to go and see the said Tapia, and to examine the warrants of Your Majesty; and, since he knew better than anyone else what was profitable to your royal service in these parts, to come to some agreement with the said Tapia as to what was most advantageous, for I conceived that he would not exceed them in any way. I besought him thus in the presence of Your Majesty's treasurer, who also charged him in the same sense. He departed for the city of Vera Cruz where the said Tapia was staying; and to insure that, in the city or wherever the Inspector might come, he would be well served and accommodated, I sent two or three notable persons with the said Father. After they left, I awaited his answer.

Meanwhile I was preparing for my departure, giving orders about some things necessary to Your Majesty's service, and for the pacification and quieting of these parts. Some ten or twelve days afterwards the justice and Municipal Council of Vera Cruz wrote to me that the said Tapia had presented the provisions he brought from Your Majesty and your governors in your royal name, and that they had been received with all due reverence, but as for executing them, they had answered that as most of the Municipal Council were here with me, aiding in the siege of the city, they would report to them, and all would do and comply with what was most profitable to Your Majesty's service and the good of the country. The said Tapia was somewhat displeased by this reply, and had even attempted something scandalous. As this grieved me somewhat, I replied, praying and charging

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disuse elsewhere, was continued in Spain owing to the long centuries of warfare against the Moors and the later conflicts with the Barbary pirates. It became therefore a peculiarly Spanish institution, and was extended to all countries under Spanish rule.

them very much to look chiefly to Your Majesty's service, endeavouring to satisfy the said Tapia and not to give occasion for any tumult as I was about starting to see him, ready to comply with what Your Majesty had ordered and was most suitable to your service. Being on the very eve of starting on my journey, and the captain and people, whom I intended to send to the river Panuco, having been detained here, where it was necessary, while I was away for this city to remain well guarded, the Procurators of this New Spain requested me with many protestations not to leave, because, as this entire province of Mexico and Temixtitan had only recently been pacified, it would be disturbed by my absence, and much injury would be done to the service of Your Majesty and to the tranquillity of the country; they gave many other causes and reasons for their said requirement that I should not leave this city at that present time, and they told me they would go themselves to the city of Vera Cruz where the said Tapia was staying, with power of attorney from the councillors, and would see the warrants of Your Majesty and do all that was suitable to Your Royal service. As this seemed to us expedient, the said procurators left, and I wrote to the said Tapia letting him know what was happening, and that I was sending my power of attorney to Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, and to Diego de Soto and Diego Valdenebro, who were there in the town of Vera Cruz, in order that in my name, they together with the municipal councillors and procurators of their municipal councils, might take measures to do what was suitable to Your Majesty's service and for the good of the country; for they have been and are persons who would do so. They met Tapia, who was already on the road, accompanied by Fray Pedro, and required him to return to the city of Cempoal, and there Tapia presented Your Majesty's provisions which were received by all, with the submission due to Your Majesty. As

for executing them, they appealed that to the presence of Your Majesty, because such was advantageous to your royal service for the causes and reasons apparent in their same petition, and as will appear more fully from what passed; all of which the procurators who came from this New Spain carried, signed by a public notary. After exchanging other decrees and requirements between the said inspector and the procurators, he embarked in his ship as he was required to do, because, after publishing that he had come to be governor and captain of these parts his presence had caused some disquietude, and the people of Mexico and Temixtitan had plotted that the natives here should rebel and work a great treason, which, if it had been carried out would have been worse than the past. The plan was, that certain Indians who were in Mexico, agreeing with the natives of this province which the alguacil mayor had gone to pacify, should come to me in all haste, telling me that twenty ships had arrived on the coast with a great many people, and that, as they had not come on land, they could not be good people, and that I should come there and see what was the matter, they having prepared themselves, and going with me as warriors; and, to make me believe this, they brought me a drawing of the ships on paper. As they brought me this news secretly, I immediately divined that their intention was mischievous, and its purpose was to get me out of this province, for the chiefs of it had known all these past days that I had been prepared to march, but seeing that I remained quiet they devised this plan. I dissembled with them, and afterwards captured some who had invented the plot.

The coming of the said Tapia and his want of experience of the country and its people caused a great deal of confusion, and his remaining here would have done much harm, had not God remedied it, and he would have done better service to Your Majesty, if when he was in the

island of Hispaniola he had refrained from coming, without first consulting Your Majesty, and making known the condition of things in these parts. For he had learned from the ships I had sent to the said island for help, and knew clearly that the scandal it was hoped to create by the coming of the armada of Panfilo de Narvaez had been remedied, principally by what the governors and royal council of Your Majesty had provided; and more still, for the said Tapia had been required many times by the Admiral and the judges and officials of Your Majesty who reside in the said island of Hispaniola not to interfere in these parts without Your Majesty first being informed of everything that had happened, and hence they forbade his coming under certain penalties; but by scheming and looking more to his private interest than to Your Majesty's service he obtained the revocation of the prohibition. I relate all this to Your Majesty, because, when the said Tapia left, the procurators and myself did not send a report, for he would not have been a good carrier of our letters, and also that Your Majesty may see and believe that, in not having received the said Tapia, Your Majesty had been well served, as will be more fully proven as often as may be necessary.

In a chapter before this, I made known to Your Majesty that the captain, whom I had sent to conquer the province of Guaxaca, was waiting there for my commands, and, as he was needed, and was judge and lieutenant in the town of Segura de la Frontera, I wrote to him to give the eighty men and ten horsemen whom he had to Pedro de Alvarado. The latter I had sent to subjugate the province of Tututepeque, forty leagues beyond Guaxaca near the South Sea, where they did much damage to, and made war against, those who had given themselves as Your Majesty's vassals, and to those of the province of Tututepeque, because they had allowed us to come through their country to discover the South Sea. Pedro

de Alvarado left this said city the last of January of this present year, and, with the people he took from here, and with those he got in the province of Guaxaca, he united forty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, aided by forty archers and musketeers, and two small field pieces. Twenty days later, I received letters from the said Pedro de Alvarado, saying that he was on the road towards the province of Tututepeque, and he told me that he had captured certain native spies, and obtained information from them; for they had told him that the lord of Tututepeque and his people were expecting him on the field and he was determined to do in that journey all he possibly could to pacify that province, and besides the Spaniards had collected many and good warriors.

While waiting to hear the end of all this business, I received letters on the 4th of the month of March of the same year from the said Pedro de Alvarado in which he reported to me that he had entered that province, and that three or four towns of it had set themselves to resist him, but had not persevered in it, and that he had entered the town and city of Tututepeque, and had been well received as far as appearances went; and that the chief had asked him to lodge there in some of his great houses, which were thatched with straw, but that, inasmuch as the place was not very suitable for the horsemen, he had not accepted, but had come down to a part of the city which was more level; that he had also done this because he had learned that the chief had planned to kill him and all of them, by setting fire at midnight to the houses where the Spaniards were lodged.

When God had disclosed this baseness, he had feigned ignorance and, as if accidentally, had carried the chief and his son with him and had decided to keep them in his power as prisoners; they had given him twenty-five thousand *castellanos* and from what the vassals of that chief had told him, he believed there were great treas-

ures. The whole of the province was as pacified as possible, and they carried on their markets and commerce as before. The country was very rich in gold mines, for in his presence they had taken out a sample which was sent to me. Three days before, he had been to the sea, and taken possession of it for Your Majesty, where, in his presence, they had taken out a sample of pearls which he likewise sent to me, and which I sent to Your Majesty, together with the sample from the gold mines.

As God, Our Lord, had well guided this business, and fulfilled my desire to serve Your Majesty on this South Sea, being as it is of such importance, I have provided with so much diligence that, in one of the three places where I discovered the sea, two medium-sized caravels and two brigantines are being built: the caravels for the purpose of discovering, and the brigantines to follow the coast. For this purpose, I sent, under a reliable person, forty Spaniards, amongst whom go ship-masters, ship-carpenters, wood-sawyers, blacksmiths, and seamen; and I have sent to the city for nails, sails, and other things necessary for the said ships, and all possible haste will be used to finish and launch them. Your Majesty may believe that it will be a great thing to accomplish this, and the greatest service since the Indies have been discovered will be thus rendered to Your Majesty.

Conspiracy of Villafaña

While I was in the city of Tesaico, before we laid siege to Temixtitan, preparing and furnishing ourselves with the necessities for the said siege, and entirely unaware of what certain persons were plotting, one of the conspirators warned me that certain friends of Diego Velasquez, who were in my company, had treasonably plotted to kill me, and that amongst them they had elected a captain, an alcalde, and alguacil mayor, and other officials. My informer begged that I should thwart this by all means, for, besides the scandal which would follow, re-

specting my person, it was clear that not a Spaniard would escape, for, seeing us turned against one another not only would we find the enemy against us, but even those whom we regarded as friends would join in and finish with all of us. I thanked Our Lord, because in the discovery of this treachery lay the remedy. We immediately seized the principal offender, who spontaneously confessed that he had designed and planned, with many persons whom he betrayed in his confession, to assault and kill us, and to take the Government of the country for Diego Velasquez, and that it was true he had designed to appoint captains and alcaldes, and that he himself was to be the alguacil mayor, and that he was to seize and kill me. Many persons were involved in this, whom he had placed on a list which was found in his lodgings (although torn in pieces), together with the names of persons with whom he had spoken of the said affair; he had not only contemplated this in Tesaico, but he had also communicated it, and spoken of it during the war against the province of Tepeaca. After hearing the confession of this man, who was called Antonio de Villafaña, a native of Zamora, and as he reiterated it, the judge and myself condemned him to death, which was executed on his person.[1] Although we found others inculpated in this offence, I dissembled with them, treating them as friends, because the case being mine, although more properly it might be said to be that of Your Ma-

[1] This man was a private soldier who had come to Mexico in Narvaez's company; not Cortes alone but also Sandoval, Alvarado, and Olid were to be killed, and the commandership given to Francisco Verdugo, brother-in-law to Diego Velasquez, who was said, however, to be ignorant of the conspiracy. The plan was for several of the conspirators to stab the four leaders while they were seated at table. Cortes displayed a wise self-restraint in going no further in the affair than the execution of Villafaña, though he had the list of other names, the finding of some of which surprised and pained him greatly. He spread the report that Villafaña had swallowed the paper containing the list of the guilty ones.

jesty, I was not willing to proceed rigorously against them; this dissimulation has not produced much advantage, because since then some partisans of Diego Velasquez have started many intrigues, and have secretly created many seditions and scandals, in which it has been necessary for me to be more on my guard against them than against our enemies. But God, Our Lord, has always conducted everything in such a manner, that, without executing any punishment on them, there has been, and exists, peace and tranquillity; and if from henceforth I should discover anything else it shall be punished as justice dictates.

After the city of Temixtitan was captured, and while we were in Cuyoacan, Don Fernando, the lord of Tesaico died, which much grieved us all because he was a good vassal of Your Majesty and a great friend of the Christians; and with the approval of the chiefs and the notables of that city and of his province the lordship was given in the name of Your Majesty to a younger brother, who was baptised and took the name of Don Carlos,[1] and as far as we know he has followed until now in the footsteps of his brother, and seems much pleased with our habits and conversation.

I made known to Your Majesty in the other account how there was a very high and conical mountain near the provinces of Tascaltecal and Guaxocingo, from which much smoke almost constantly issued, ascending straight like an arrow.[2] As the Indians gave us to understand that it was a very fearful thing to ascend it, and that

[1] This is an error; after Don Fernando's death, the young prince Ahuaxpitzcatzin, an illegitimate son of Nezahualpilli, who had received the name of Carlos upon his baptism as a Christian, was chosen King, but Cortes had refused to recognise the election, and had prevailed on the electors to annul it in favour of his ally, the ambitious Ixtlilxochitl, whose Christian name was also Don Fernando. The confusion of the two Fernandos, Kings of Texcoco has already been noticed.

[2] The volcano of Orizaba which was mentioned in the First Letter. The Indian name was Citlatepetl, meaning *Star Mountain*. Humboldt gives the height as 17,368 feet; the crater is now extinct.

those who went there perished, I made certain Spaniards undertake it, and examine the summit of the mountain. When they ascended, the smoke came out with such noise that they neither could nor dared to reach its mouth; and afterwards I made some other Spaniards go, who ascended twice, reaching the mouth of the mountain where the smoke comes out, and from one side of the mouth to the other it was two crossbow-shots, for the circumference of it is almost three-quarters of a league, and the depth is so great that they could not see the bottom of it, and they found near the circumference some sulphur, deposited there by the smoke. They heard such a great noise made by the smoke that they made all haste to come down, and before they had descended to the middle of the mountain an infinite number of stones came rolling down, greatly endangering their position; and the Indians held it a very great thing to have dared to go where the Spaniards had gone.

In one of my letters, I told Your Majesty that the natives of these parts were much more capable than those of the other islands, appearing to be as intelligent and as reasonable as is ordinarily considered sufficient; wherefor it appeared wrong to oblige them to serve the Spaniards as those of the other islands do, though without some assistance, the conquerors and settlers of these parts would on the other hand be unable to maintain themselves. In order not to force the Indians to help the Spaniards, it seemed to me that Your Majesty might order that as compensation the latter should receive assistance from the incomes which here belong to Your Majesty for their provisions and sustenance; respecting this Your Majesty may provide what seems profitable to your service, according to the more extensive relation which I have made to Your Majesty. Seeing the many and continual outlays of Your Majesty, and that we ought rather to augment your rents by all possible

means than to be an occasion of further expenses, and considering also the long time we have spent in the wars, and the necessities and debts caused thereby, and the delay attendant upon Your Majesty's decision in this case, and above all the many importunities of Your Majesty's officials and of all the Spaniards from which it was impossible to excuse myself, I found myself almost forced to place the chiefs and natives of these parts amongst the Spaniards, to recompense them for the services they have rendered to Your Majesty. Until something else is ordered or this confirmed, the said chiefs and natives serve and give each Spaniard to whom they are allotted the needful for his subsistence. This step was taken with the approbation of intelligent persons, who have had, and have, great experience of the country, for there was nothing else possible not only for the maintenance of the Spaniards but also for the preservation and good treatment of the Indian, as is shown in the more extensive relation which the procurators who now go from this New Spain will make to Your Majesty. The plantations and farms of Your Majesty have been established in the best and most convenient provinces and cities.

Most Catholic Lord, may God Our Lord preserve and augment the life and very royal person and powerful state of Your Cæsarean Majesty with increase of much greater Kingdoms and Lordships, as your royal heart may desire. From the City of Cuyoacan of this New Spain of the Ocean Sea on the 15th of May, 1522. Most Powerful Lord, Your Cæsarean Majesty's very humble servant and vassal who kisses the royal hands and feet of Your Majesty.

FERNANDO CORTES.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE FALL OF MEXICO

In the last desperate days, a final appeal was made by Quauhtemotzin to the national gods. Choosing one of the most valiant soldiers, a youth called Tlapaltecatlopuchtzin, from the quarter of Coatlan, he caused him to be vested in the armour of his dead father, the Emperor Ahuitzotl, giving him also the helmet and bow and arrows which adorned the statue of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, and which were regarded as the most sacred emblems preserved in the temple. Thus accoutred, the young warrior went forth, accompanied by a Chief named Cihuacoatlucotzin, who acted as his herald, and who called upon all the people in the name of the god, from whom they now, in their extremity, demanded a sign. The effort was vain, and the god was silent: this was on the tenth of August. On the night of the eleventh, there burst over the city a terrific storm, in the midst of which the affrighted Mexicans beheld a whirlwind of blood-red fire, throwing out sparks and flashes of light, which seemed to start from the direction of Tepeyaca and, passing over the small quarter of Tenochtitlan still left to them, bury itself in the black waters of the lake. This ominous apparition, which was probably a meteor, was accepted as a portent symbolising the downfall of the empire, and the extinction of their power. Cortes's description of the final assault, the fall of the last entrenchment, and the capture of Quauhtemotzin, is not embellished by rhetoric, but his terse language gave Charles V. a faithful picture of that dreadful massacre. Neither does Bernal Diaz enlarge upon details, and indeed no language could do justice to the horror of the fall of the Aztec city, amidst the crash of battle, the smoke and flame of burning houses, the wails of the vanquished, and the shouts of the victors. The living and the dead choked the canals, the wounded and dying were trampled together with putrefying corpses in the sea of bloody mire into which the streets had been converted; the stifling August air reeked with the mingled smell of fresh carnage and decaying bodies, while, amidst these human shambles, the emaciated forms of women and children, destitute of any refuge, tottered pitifully under the merciless weapons of the savage allies, who gave no quarter, but hunted all alike through this hell of despair, like demons set upon the ghosts of the eternally damned.

The courage of the defenders never flagged; under the leadership

of their young sovereign, who kept his serenity throughout and exercised his best generalship. These naked barbarians, weakened by famine and confronted by inevitable defeat, fought against a steel-clad foe, armed with guns both on land and on their ships, which mowed down a very harvest of death at every discharge. Never did they so much as name surrender thus verifying literally the words with which Quauhtemotzin answered the Spanish overtures for peace, that they would all perish to the last man in the city and he would die fighting.

Cortes daily renewed his offers of honourable terms for the Emperor and his people if the city would surrender. Day after day, with infinite patience, he made appointments which Quauhtemotzin never kept; time after time, he wasted hours in waiting for better counsels to prevail; but nothing he could say or do sufficed to allay the distrust of Quauhtemotzin, or bring the Mexicans to terms. Their choice was made; they had had enough of the Spaniards, whose semi-divine character was an exploded myth, and whose presence in the land was felt to be incompatible with the Aztec sovereignty. Cortes protests throughout the greatest reluctance to destroy the city, and declares repeatedly that the necessity of doing so filled him with inexpressible grief. The fate known to be in store for every Spaniard taken alive, and the sight of the hideous rites of sacrifice, performed under the very eyes of the soldiers, helpless to intervene, followed by the cannibal feasts, in which the mangled members of their comrades furnished the banquet, were certainly sufficient to arouse the Spaniards to a very frenzy against such inhuman foes, and yet there is no where found any hint that the spirit of vengeance prompted reprisals on the prisoners who fell into their hands. Such remains of the Spanish victims as could be found were afterwards collected and reverently buried: a chapel dedicated to the Martyrs was erected over the spot, which was afterwards replaced by the Church of San Hipolito (Orozco y Berra, lib. iii., cap. viii.).

Riotous celebrations of the city's fall naturally followed, the opportune arrival of some casks of wine and pork from Cuba furnishing the substance for a banquet, which was followed by dancing. Bernal Diaz remarks that the "plant of Noah was the cause of many fooleries and worse," and that he refrains from mentioning the names of those who disgraced themselves by over-indulgence and unseemly antics. Fray Bartolomé Olmedo was much scandalised at this profane celebration, and quickly asserted his spiritual authority over the men. The next morning a solemn mass of thanksgiving was said, and the good friar delivered a sermon on the moral and religious duties of the conquerors. Cortes and others received the sacraments, and these becoming rites ended decorously with a procession in which the crucifix and an image of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by the military standards, were carried to the sound of drums, alternating with chanted litanies.

These vinous and pious festivities over, the first great disappointment of the conquest had to be faced. The fabulous treasure was nowhere to be found, nor did tortures succeed in producing it. The place of its alleged burial in the lake, indicated by Quauhtemotzin, was searched by divers, who, after many efforts, recovered only about ninety crowns worth of gold (Bernal Diaz, cap. clvii). The same authority states his opinion that, though it was rumoured that vast treasures had been thrown into the lake four days before the end of the siege, the amount had doubtless already been greatly diminished before it came into Quauhtemotzin's hands, and moreover that, from the first, the value of it had seemed double what it really was found to be when it came to be accurately estimated. The discontent amongst the soldiery was great, and expressed itself in several ways, one of which, more original than the others, was the writing of *pasquinades* on the white walls of Cortes's quarter at Coyohuacan, some of which were witty, some insolent, and others not fit for print. Cortes even deigned to reply to some of them in the same vein, and on the same wall, for he rather prided himself on his ready wit and skill at verse-making, but Fray Bartolomé, perceiving that the limits of propriety were being overstepped, advised Cortes to stop the practice, which he did by publishing severe punishments for any further writing on the walls.

Positive data, on which to base a computation of the numbers engaged during the siege and the lives lost, are wanting. Cortes estimates that 67,000 Mexicans fell in the last three assaults on the city, and that fifty thousand died of starvation and diseases, without taking any account of all those who perished during the earlier days of the siege. Bernal Diaz gives no figures, but both he and the historian Oviedo state their conviction that not more lives were lost at the siege of Jerusalem than in Mexico. The Jewish historian Josephus computes the losses of his people at 1,100,000 souls! The comparison with these appalling figures is so obviously exaggerated that these two authorities may safely be disregarded. Writing from the Mexican standpoint, Ixtlilxochitl puts the number of the dead, from all causes, at 240,000 persons, which greatly exceeds the estimate of Cortes. The same discrepancy appears in the counting of the forces which laid down their arms when Quauhtemotzin was captured. Oviedo leads again, with 70,000. Ixtlilxochitl follows, with 60,000, and Herrera, who agrees with Torquemada, puts the number at 30,000 fighting men. (Herrera, *Hist. Gen.*, lib. ii., cap. vii.; Torquemada, *Monarchia Ind.*, lib. iv., cap. ci.; Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Españoles*, p. 49. Oviedo lib. xxxiii.).

Whatever the exact number may have been, the Mexican Empire was destroyed, its capital annihilated, and a vast number of people butchered, amidst scenes of unexcelled ferocity and horror. The annals of no great siege record deeds of greater bravery, and, had the justice of their cause equalled the heroism of their defence, the down-

fall of the Aztecs would be forever sung in song and story wherever brave deeds are remembered.

As has been elsewhere explained, the laurels of the conquest are not exclusively for Spanish brows. The superlative generalship and personal qualities of Cortes, their superior arms and knowledge of military tactics, and their indomitable courage, were the Spaniards' contributions to the successful issue of the long campaign. In the ready hatred of its neighbours, and the quick desertion of its dependencies and allies, is read the proof of the inherent weakness of the Aztec Empire. All that these peoples possessed—their knowledge of the country, their labour, their treasure, their fighting men, and their thirst for vengeance—were placed at the disposition of Cortes, and thus the conquest was accomplished. Even admitting the most and the worst that has been said of the Spaniards' methods in carrying on this war of invasion, the result commands our applause in the name of humanity.

The Mexican civilisation, even granting that it had reached the high perfection claimed for it by some writers, was chaotic, stationary, and barren; it rested upon despotic power, and its many crimes were expiated in the blood of their perpetrators.

Whatever culture and refinement of living there were, centred in the capital and its immediate neighbourhood, the outlying provinces being peopled by aboriginal, not to say savage tribes, which justified their existence by the tribute of men and money they paid, without being sharers in the learning and luxury their labours sustained. "*Humanum paucis vivit genus.*"

The arrival of the Spaniards in the midst of this chaos of tyranny and disloyalty shattered the loosely joined organisation, whose inferior character foredoomed it to destruction when brought into contact with a higher and more progressive type of civilisation.

The substitution of the Christian religion for the horrors of human sacrifices and the revolting cannibal feasts is, of itself, a sufficient justification for the overthrow of the Aztec Empire, whose bloody and degrading rites were of the very essence of its religious system. Upon the ruins of the old order, a new civilisation has been founded, from which a nation still in the process of formation has developed, in which Spanish and Indian blood are mingled, and which is advancing on the road of human progress to what destiny we know not, but in which the humblest Indian has his place living in a securer present, and moving towards a higher future, than any his own race could have shaped for him. Many of the best men in modern Mexico trace with pride their descent from Aztec kings and nobles. A uniform and rich language with its system of phonetic writing, the introduction of horses and beasts of burden, the use of iron and leather, improved systems of mining and agriculture which have brought under civilisation vast tracts of land, and increased the variety and quality of crops —these and countless other resources, unknown and unknowable to

the Mexicans, have revolutionised the conditions of their existence beyond anything their ancestors could have dreamed.

Even at the price it cost, the conquest must be approved, though it obliterated an interesting and wonderful civilisation so entirely that the few relics left serve but to stimulate enquiries to which few answers are forthcoming.

With the destruction of the archives of Texcoco, and of the Golden Key to the hieroglyphs, the sponge was passed over the tablets of Aztec history: unwise laws destroyed native arts and crafts, whose products had astonished the foremost artisans of Europe, while the secrets of the lapidaries, of the gold- and silver-smiths, of the deft workers in feathers, and of other unique crafts, perished for ever leaving the civilisation of Anahuac a mystery for all time.

FOURTH LETTER

FOURTH LETTER

Very High, very Powerful, and most Excellent Prince very Catholic and Invincible Emperor, King and Lord.

In the account which I sent to Your Majesty by Juan de Ribera, concerning what had happened to me in these parts after the second letter I despatched to Your Highness, I said that, in order to pacify and reduce to the royal service of Your Majesty the Provinces of Guatusco, Tuxtepeque, Quatasca, and others in the neighbourhood, which are on the South Sea and which since the revolt were in rebellion, I had sent the alguacil mayor thither with some people; I told what had happened to him on the road; and also that I had ordered him to make a settlement in those provinces and to name the town Medellin. It now remains that Your Highness should know how the said town was founded and all that country and its provinces subdued and pacified.

I sent him reinforcements, and ordered him to go up the coast to the province of Guazacualco, which is fifty leagues from where that town was founded and one hundred and twenty from this city; for, when I was in this city while Montezuma was still alive, striving to discover all the secrets of these parts in order to give a full account of them to Your Majesty, I had sent thither Diego de Ordaz,[1] who resides at the Court of Your Majesty;

[1] Diego de Ordaz was a native of Tierra de Campo, and first came to Mexico when he was forty years old, with Juan de Grijalba; he was a Captain of infantry under Cortes, and conducted the first ascent of Popocatepetl, for which exploit he was afterwards granted a volcano in his armorial bearings. He received the Knighthood of Santiago, and died as Governor of Maranon.

and the lords and natives of the said province had received him cordially, and had offered themselves as vassals and subjects of Your Highness. I had received information that there was a very good harbour for ships at the mouth of a large river which flows through that province; for the said Ordaz and those with him had explored it and had found the country very well adapted for settling. The absence of harbours on this coast made me anxious to find a good one where I might found a town.

I ordered the alguacil mayor that, before entering the province, he should send certain messengers whom I gave him, natives of this city, to tell the inhabitants that he went there by my orders to discover if they were still loyal to Your Majesty's service and faithful to our amity, as they had formerly professed to be; and to tell them also that, on account of the wars I had carried on with the sovereign of this city and its dependencies, I had sent no one to visit them for a long time, but that I had always considered them as my friends and vassals of Your Highness and that, as such, they might count upon my friendship if they had need of it; and that hence I sent my people thither to pacify and to assist them in anything they might require, and to settle that province. The alguacil mayor departed with his people, and did as I commanded him, but did not find the natives well disposed as they had formerly professed, but rather they displayed a warlike disposition to prevent the alguacil mayor and his people from entering their country. He managed so well that, surprising a town one night, he seized a woman whom all in those parts obeyed, and everything quieted because she sent to call the chiefs and ordered them to observe whatever was commanded them in Your Majesty's name as she herself intended to do. They arrived at the river four leagues from its mouth where they founded a town on a good site—as no good place was found nearer

the sea, to which the name of Espiritu Santo was given, and the alguacil mayor stopped there for some days until many of the neighbouring provinces were pacified and brought to the service of Your Catholic Majesty. Some of these were: Tabasco, which is on the River Victoria, or Grijalba as it is commonly called, and that of Chimaclan, and Quechula, and Quizaltepeque, and others which being insignificant I do not name. And we apportioned the natives to the householders of the said town to serve them; and they actually do serve them, although some, I mean those of Chimaclan, Tabasco, and Quizaltepeque, have again rebelled. About a month since, I sent a captain with some people from this city to subdue them to the service of Your Majesty, and to punish their rebellion; I have had no news of them but I believe, Our Lord willing, they will succeed, as they took a good supply of artillery, ammunition, crossbowmen, and horsemen.

In the account, most Catholic Sire, which the said Juan de Ribera took with him, I also made it known to Your Cæsarian and Catholic Majesty that the ruler of the great province near Mechuacan, whose name is Casulci,[1] had offered himself and his people as subjects and vassals of Your Cæsarian Majesty and had sent certain presents by his messengers, which presents I sent with the Procurators who went from this New Spain to Your Highness. As the province and dominion of the said Lord Casulci, according to the information which certain Spaniards whom I sent there gave me, was large, and, from all indications, very rich, and since it is so near to this great city, after I had received reinforcements, I sent thither a captain with seventy cavalry and two hundred foot soldiers, well armed and provided with artillery, to explore that province and its secrets, with

[1] Catzolcin, King of Michoacan and ruler of Xalisco; he was afterwards burned alive with many of his nobles by Nuño de Guzman, who first robbed him of ten thousand *marks* of silver, a quantity of gold, and six thousand men for his army.

orders, if they found it as it was described, to settle in the principal city—Huicicila. They were well received and lodged by the chiefs and natives, who, besides providing them with food, gave them as much as three thousand *marks* of silver, so mixed with copper that one-half may have been silver; and about five thousand *dollars* of gold, likewise mixed with silver in unknown proportion and some cotton stuffs, and other things; after having separated Your Majesty's fifth, these were distributed amongst the Spaniards of the expedition. As they were not much satisfied with the prospects of settling in the country, they objected, and even showed such disaffection that some were punished; on which account I ordered those who wished to do so to go back, and the others I ordered to go on with a captain to the South Sea, where I have established a town called Zacatula,[1] distant one hundred leagues from Huicicila, and where I have four ships in the dockyard for the exploration of that Sea as far as God our Lord will permit me. While marching to Zacatula, the said captain and his people heard of a province, called Coliman, which lies off the road about fifty leagues westward; so, without my permission, he went thither with his people and many allies from the Province of Mechuacan. He marched some distance into it, coming into conflict with the natives, and, although he had forty horsemen and more than one hundred foot soldiers, musketeers, and cross-bowmen, they routed him, and drove him from the country, killing three Spaniards and many of our Indian allies; he then took refuge in Zacatula. As soon as I heard of this incident, I summoned the captain and punished him for his disobedience.

In the former account which I sent to Your Cæsarian

[1] Zacatula was the first port established on the Pacific coast. Cortes made a dock-yard there. It still bears the same name and is situated just north of Acapulco.

Majesty, I related how I had sent Pedro de Alvarado to the province of Tututepeque [1] on the South Sea, and I could say no more than that he arrived there and had taken the chief and his son prisoners; and that they had given him some gold and samples from the gold mines, and of pearls, because, up to that time, I had nothing further to report. Your Highness will recollect that, in reply to the news which he sent me, I immediately ordered him to seek an available site in that province for a settlement, and that I also directed householders of the town of Segura de la Frontera to move there, as there was no further need for that town so near to this city. Thus it was done, and the town was called Segura la Frontera as before: the natives of Quaxaca, Coaclan, Coasclahuaca, Tachquiaco, and others in that neighbourhood, were distributed amongst the householders for their service and willingly made themselves useful; and Pedro de Alvarado stopped there as chief justice and captain in my place. While I was engaged in conquering the province of Panuco, as I shall hereafter state to Your Majesty, the alcaldes and municipal officers of the said town besought Pedro de Alvarado to go, with power of attorney, to negotiate certain matters with me, which they desired of him, to which he agreed; and, when he was gone, the alcaldes and municipal officers formed a conspiracy, convoking the community and appointing other alcaldes against the will of him whom the said Pedro de Alvarado had left there as captain, and they removed the said town to the province of Guaxaca, thus causing much disturbance and confusion in those parts. When I learned of this from the rightful captain, I sent Diego de Ocampo,[2] alcalde mayor, to obtain information of

[1] Not to be confounded with the other town of the same name in the present state of Puebla.

[2] Diego de Ocampo was from Caceres; he was the first navigator who reached Peru, having sailed from Tehuantepec in his own ship.

what had happened, and to punish the culprits. They, hearing this, fled, and wandered about for some days until I captured them, so that the said alcalde mayor secured only one of the rebels, whom he sentenced to death; and this man appealed to me. I delivered those whom I had captured to the said alcalde mayor, who proceeded against them likewise, and sentenced them as he did the other, and they also appealed; the cases are now finished, and ready to be sentenced in the second instance before me. I have examined them, and, while I think their error was very grave, still, considering the long time they have been in prison, I have determined to commute the death penalty to that of civil death or banishment, forbidding them to return to these parts without Your Majesty's permission under pain of incurring their first sentence.

During this time, the chief of the said province of Tututepeque died, and it and other neighbouring provinces rebelled, so I sent Pedro de Alvarado, and with him the son of the said chief whom I had kept here in my power. Although he had some encounters in which some Spaniards were killed, they resumed their allegiance to Your Majesty, and are now pacified and serve the Spaniards to whom they are surely and pacifically apportioned, although the town has not been resettled for want of people and because at present there is no need for it, as, since their chastisement, they are so subdued that they come even to this city when they are summoned.

Immediately after this city of Temixtitan and its dependencies were recovered there were reduced to the Imperial Crown of Your Cæsarian Majesty two provinces called Tututepeque[1] and Mezclitan[2] which are forty

He was one of those left in charge of the Government by Cortes when he went to Spain.

[1] Tututepec in the State of Puebla.

[2] Metztithlan.

leagues towards the north and border on the province of Panuco. The country is an extremely strong one, and the people are well versed in the exercise of arms on account of the adversaries who surround them on all sides. They, seeing what had been done to these people of Panuco, and how nothing hindered Your Majesty's progress sent their messengers to me and offered themselves as your subjects and vassals. I received them in the royal name of Your Majesty, and as such they always considered themselves until the coming of Cristobal de Tapia, who caused such disturbances and scandals amongst these other peoples that they, too, not only renounced their obedience, but even did much harm to the neighbourhood where there are vassals of Your Catholic Majesty, burning many towns and killing many people. I had no people to spare at that moment, as they were scattered in so many other places, but, seeing that to leave this unnoticed was very mischievous, and fearing that the people who bordered on those provinces might join them for fear of reprisals if they did not, and also because I was not myself entirely satisfied as to their loyalty, I sent a captain with thirty horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, crossbowmen, musketeers, and many Indian allies. Several encounters took place in which they killed some of our friendlies and two Spaniards; but our Lord was pleased that they should proffer peace of their own free will; the chiefs were brought to me, and, as they had come without being captured, I pardoned them. Afterwards, when I went to the province of Panuco, the natives spread the report that I was gone to Castile, which news caused much apprehension; and one of the two provinces—Tututepeque—again rebelled, and its chief descended with many people and burned more than twenty towns of our friendlies, and killed and captured numbers of them. Finding myself on the march from the province of Panuco, I returned and subdued

them, and, although at the outset they killed some of our friendlies who had straggled behind, and some ten or twelve horses foundered on account of the roughness of the mountain roads, all the province was conquered, and the lord and his brother, a youth, and another, his captain-general, who guarded one of the frontiers, were captured. The lord and his captain-general were immediately hanged, and all who were captured in the war, perhaps two hundred persons, were made slaves and were branded and sold by auction. Your Majesty's fifth having been paid, the rest of the proceeds were distributed amongst those who took part in the war, although there was not sufficient to pay for one-third of the horses which perished, as, on account of the poverty of the country, no other spoil had been obtained. The rest of the people in the said province surrendered peaceably and have kept their word. That young brother of the dead chief is now lord, although for the present he is of no service or profit as the country is so poor, still he keeps it in such security that those who do serve us will not be disturbed, and moreover, I have placed amongst them some of the natives of this country for greater security.

Mission of Juan Bono

At this season, Most Invincible Cæsar, there arrived at the port and town of Espiritu Santo, which I mentioned in the chapter before the last, a very small and miserable brigantine coming from Cuba, on board which was one Juan Bono de Quejo who had come to this country in the armada of Panfilo de Narvaez as master of one of the ships; and, as it appeared from the despatches he brought, he came by order of Don Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos,[1] in the belief that Cristobal de Tapia

[1] Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and titular Archbishop of Rosano, was of noble family, and when Dean of Seville had been named by King Ferdinand to the presidency of the newly constituted Royal Council for the Indies, which had charge of the affairs of the recently discovered realms in the New World. This appointment was sin-

whom he had designated for Governor of this country was here. Lest he should meet with an unfavourable reception, as for notorious reasons he was led to fear, he was sent by way of the island of Cuba in order to communicate with Diego de Velasquez; this he did and was given by the latter the brigantine in which he came. The said Juan Bono brought about one hundred letters of the same tenor, signed by the said Bishop, and I even believe they were in blank so that he could deliver them to such persons as seemed expedient here, telling them that they would render great service to Your Cæsarian Majesty by receiving the said Tapia, and promising them increased and signal favours for so doing; saying also that they should know Your Excellency was displeased at their being under my command, besides many other things tending to excite them to sedition and disquiet. To me, he wrote another letter, telling me the same, and saying if I would obey the said Tapia he would obtain signal favours from Your Majesty for me, and if not, I might be sure he would always be my mortal enemy. The arrival of this Juan Bono and the letters he brought occasioned such commotion among my company that I declare to Your Majesty I had to reassure them, explaining to them why the Bishop had written thus and

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gularly unfortunate as he possessed no aptitude for the post, and, being of choleric temper, touchy, vindictive, and given to favouritism, he seems never to have grasped the possibilities of his office, or to have comprehended the meaning of the events, whose course he was called upon to shape. Instead of aiding and encouraging the daring men who were eager to stake everything, including their lives, in great enterprises, he almost invariably vexed and persecuted them, perverting his great power to thwart the very undertakings it was his business to favour. He was bitterly hostile to Columbus, continuing his opposition to his son Diego. The story of his dealings with Cortes sufficiently appears from the accounts in these Letters. The Emperor's eyes were finally opened to his incurable defects of character, and his influence received its death-blow from the transactions of his agents with Cortes. He died March 14, 1524, having done his worst during thirty years with the interests confided to his direction.

that they should not fear his threats as the greatest service to Your Majesty, and for which they would receive greater favours, was to resent the meddling of the Bishop and of any of his creatures in those parts; because his intention was to conceal the truth from Your Majesty, obtaining favours the while without your knowing what was given in exchange. I had much trouble to pacify them, especially as I was informed—although I dissembled at the time—that some murmured amongst themselves, saying that since thus far they had received nothing but threats in payment for their services they might better form themselves into *comunidades*[1] as had been done in Castile until Your Majesty should be informed of the truth; for the Bishop had so many fingers in this business and thus prevented their accounts from reaching Your Highness, as he held the office of the *Casa de la Contratacion*[2] at Seville in his hands, where their messengers were ill-treated, and their letters and monies were seized, and reinforcements, supplies, arms, and provisions were withheld from them. When I spoke to them as I have explained above, and told them that Your Majesty was not in any wise cognisant of this, and they might rest assured that, when Your Highness came

[1] Referring to the uprising of the Town Corporations in Spain, provoked by a grant of subsidies which the Cortes held in Galicia made to the king, without having first obtained from him the settlement of long standing grievances which awaited his adjustment. The Corporations were powerful bodies, governed by independent and democratic principles, possessing charters which granted them valuable privileges and immunities which they jealously defended against the Crown, the Church, and the Nobles. They sent representatives to the Cortes and could check the royal power by refusing funds. When, therefore, the Cortes subserviently voted the supplies asked by Charles V., who was in haste to leave for Germany where he had been elected Emperor, the cities revolted. Toledo, setting the example, under the leadership of Juan de Padilla was followed by Burgos, Segovia Zamora, and others, including Valladolid, where the cardinal-regent was then living.

[2] *Casa de Contratacion*, or India house as Prescott aptly translates the name, was created for the administration of affairs in America.

to know, their services would be recompensed and they would receive such favours as loyal vassals who had served their King and Lord merited, they became re-assured, and they were and are still content with the favour which Your Highness deemed well to bestow upon me with Your Royal provisions, and they serve very willingly as the fruits of their service give testimony. They deserve, therefore, that Your Majesty should concede them great favours, which I on my part supplicate most humbly from Your Highness because I deem anything conceded to them as no less a favour than if it had been granted to me, for without them I could not have served Your Highness as I have; and especially do I most humbly supplicate Your Highness to order some recognition of their services to be sent them in writing, promising them favours; because besides paying a debt which Your Majesty owes them, they will be animated henceforth with greater good will to continue.

By a royal *cedula* which Your Cæsarian Majesty ordered to be given at the petition of Juan de Ribera, respecting the affair of the *adelantado*,[1] Francisco de Garay, it seems that Your Highness was informed that I was about to go very soon to the river Panuco to pacify that region, because it was stated that there was a good harbour there, and because the natives had killed many Spaniards, not only of those under Francisco de Garay's captain, but also those of another ship which sometime afterwards arrived on that coast of whom none escaped alive. Some of the natives of those parts had come to me, ex-

[1] The title given to the Governor of a province, and which, in the case of the Spanish discoverers, meant the Commander of an exploring expedition who was empowered to colonise and establish a Government of which he should be the head, in any countries he might discover. Las Casas sarcastically explained the etymology of the title saying "*porque se adelantaron en hacer males y daños tan gravissimos a gentes pacificos*" (because they took the lead in perpetrating such great evils and injuries on peaceful people).

cusing themselves for those murders, saying that they had acted thus because they knew those men were not under my command, and because they had been ill-treated by them; but that, if I wished to send my people there, they would esteem it a great favour and would serve them the best they could, and would thank me very much, because they feared that the others with whom they had fought might return against them and take vengeance, and also because they had hostile neighbours who molested them, whereas if I sent Spaniards there they would be protected. I was short of people when they came so I was unable to comply, but I promised I would do so as soon as possible; and thus satisfied them so that ten or twelve towns in that neighbourhood offered themselves as vassals of Your Majesty. A few days afterwards, they again returned, and besought me most earnestly to send some Spaniards to settle there, as I had done in other places, because they were much molested by their foes and others of their own nation who lived along the seacoast, because they were our friends. To comply with this, and for the purpose of making a settlement in their country, and also because I had then received reinforcements, I sent a captain with certain companions to the said river, but just as they were leaving I learned by a ship that had arrived from Cuba how the Admiral Don Diego Colon[1] and the adelantados, Diego Velasquez and Francisco de Garay, had agreed amongst themselves to go there with the hostile intention of doing me all the mischief they could. To forestall the effects of their evil intentions, and to prevent a disturbance and trouble arising from their going similar to what had occurred on the arrival of Narvaez, I determined to go myself, leaving

[1] Diego Columbus had obtained a royal decree from the Cardinal-Regent (afterwards Adrian VI.), during the Emperor's absence in Germany, which was dated from Burgos in 1521, authorising him to colonise the Panuco country.

this city as well defended as I could, so that if any of them did come there they would meet me rather than another; for I could better prevent the mischief.

I set out therefore with one hundred and twenty horsemen, three hundred foot soldiers, some artillery, and about forty thousand Indian warriors of this city and its neighbourhood. At the frontier of their country quite twenty-five leagues from the port, and in the neighbourhood of a large town called Ayntuscotaclan,[1] we encountered and fought with many warriors, but owing to our numerous Indian allies, and also to the fact that the ground was level and suitable for the cavalry, the battle did not last long; although they wounded some horses and Spaniards and some of our friendlies perished, they got the worst share, for many of them were killed. I remained in that town two or three days for the purpose of caring for the wounded and also because those who had formerly offered themselves as vassals to Your Highness came to see me there. From there they accompanied me to the port and ever afterwards rendered us the greatest possible service. I continued my march until I reached the port, and nowhere did I have any further hostile encounters, but rather, all along the road, the people came and asked pardon for their error, and offered themselves for the royal service of Your Highness. When I reached the port and river, I lodged in a town, called Chila,[2] five leagues from the sea, which was abandoned and burned because it was there that Francisco de Garay's captain and his people were routed. From there I sent messengers to the other side of the river and along those lakes which are all peopled with great towns, telling them to have no fears for what had happened in the past for I was well aware they had revolted on account of the ill-treatment they had received from our people

Campaign in Panuco

[1] The present Coscatlan at the mouth of the Huasteca River.

[2] The small lake of Chila near the mouth of the river Panuco.

and that they deserved no blame for it. But they never would come to me, but ill-treated the messengers, and even killed some of them. They also stationed themselves on the other side of the river, at the spring where we got our fresh water, and attacked those who went to fetch it. This continued for more than fifteen days while I waited always hoping to win them by kindness, and that, on seeing how well treated those were who had submitted, they would do likewise; but they had such confidence in the strength of their position among these lakes that they never would yield. And seeing that gentle means availed nothing with them, I sought a means to bring matters to a finish. I already had some canoes and managed to procure some others, so that one night I transported my men and horses across the lake without the enemy suspecting anything, and by morning I had assembled a strong troop of foot soldiers and horsemen, leaving at the same time a good garrison in my quarters. When they saw us on their side they fell upon us in great numbers so fiercely that never since I have been in this country have I been so vigorously attacked; and they killed two horses and wounded ten others so badly that they were disabled. In the course of the day—thanks to God—the enemy was defeated, and we pursued them for more than a league and killed numbers of them. With the thirty horsemen remaining and one hundred foot soldiers, I continued my march, and slept that night in a town three leagues from the camp which was found deserted. In the mosques of this town we found many articles belonging to those Spaniards who had been sent by Francisco de Garay, and who had been killed.

The next day, I set out along the shore of the lake, searching for a passage to the other side where we had seen people and towns, but I marched all day without finding it, nor any place to cross; and towards the hour

of vespers we came in sight of a very beautiful town, and marched towards it as it still lay on the shore of the lake. Upon approaching, it was already late and no people appeared, but to make sure I sent ten horsemen into the town by the main road and I with another ten went round towards the lake; for the other ten were bringing up the rear-guard and had not yet arrived. On entering the town, a number of people who had been hiding in ambush in the houses, so as to take us unawares, came out and fought so stoutly that they killed a horse and wounded almost all the others besides many Spaniards. Their determination was such that the battle lasted a long time; though we broke through them three or four times, they re-formed in a phalanx, kneeling on the ground, and, without speaking or shouting as the other natives are accustomed to do, they would await us; and each time we charged them they discharged such a volley of arrows against us that, had we not been well armoured, they would have gained a great advantage, and I believe that none of us would have escaped. It pleased our Lord that some of them who were nearest the river, which emptied into the lake near there and whose course I had followed all day long, began to throw themselves into the water, and all the others followed; and thus they dispersed, though they did not go further than the other bank of the river. Thus they on one side, and I on the other, remained until night fell, as on account of the depth of the water we could not cross to them. Indeed we were glad when they crossed, for we then returned to the town, about a sling's throw from the river, where we mounted guard and remained that night: and we ate the horse which they killed for we had no other provisions. The next day, we went out on the road, for the people of the day before did not appear; and we marched through three or four towns where there were no people nor anything but a few wine vaults, in which we found large

numbers of earthen jars filled with wine. During the whole day we met no people, and slept on the bare ground at a place where we found some fields of maize, with which the people and the horses somewhat refreshed themselves. In this wise, I continued for two or three days, without meeting any people, although we passed through many towns. Being in want of provisions, as we had not amongst the whole of us fifty pounds of bread, we returned to the camp and found the people I had left there doing very well, and having had no encounters. Seeing the entire population was on the other side of the lake where I had not been able to cross, I embarked my men, crossbowmen and musketeers, and the horses during one night, ordering them to cross to the other shore where others of my people would join them by land. Thus they arrived at a large town, where they surprised the inhabitants, killing a large number of them; the others were so frightened, seeing themselves surprised in the midst of their lakes, that they came to seek peace, and, in less than twenty days, the entire population offered themselves as subjects and vassals to Your Majesty.

Foundation of Santistevan del Puerto

When the country was pacified, I sent people to visit every part of it, in order to bring me reports of the towns and peoples. When these were brought, I chose the most suitable place, and founded there a town which I called Santistevan del Puerto,[1] establishing as inhabitants those who wished to remain, and giving them in the name of Your Majesty those towns for their service. I appointed alcaldes and municipal officers, and left a captain there as my lieutenant, besides thirty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers; I also left them a barque and a fishing boat which was brought to me with provisions from Vera

[1] San Estevan del Puerto was built on a narrow strip of land separating Lake Chila from the sea. Pedro de Valleja was placed there as his lieutenant.

Cruz. One of my servants also had sent me a ship with provisions of meat, bread, wine, oil, and vinegar, but everything was lost, excepting three men who took refuge on a desert island five leagues from the coast for whom I sent to search. They were found in good health, having kept themselves alive by eating the seals which were plentiful on the island, and a kind of fruit like figs.[1] I certify to Your Majesty that this expedition cost me alone more than thirty thousand *dollars* in gold, as Your Majesty may order to be shown by the accounts, if such is your will; and those who went with me had as great expenses, for horses, provisions, arms, and horse-shoes, which at that time cost their weight in gold, or twice their weight in silver. But, to serve Your Majesty well, we would have undertaken it, even had our expenses been greater, for, besides putting those Indians under the imperial yoke of Your Majesty, our expedition produced good results, for, immediately after, there arrived a ship with many people and provisions and, had the country not been at peace, none of them would have escaped, as had happened with the others whom the Indians had killed, and whose remains we had found in their temples. I mean their skins, cured in such a manner that we recognised the faces of many of them. When the adelantado, Francisco de Garay, arrived in that province, as I shall relate to Your Cæsarian Majesty later, neither he, nor any of those with him, would have escaped alive; for the wind drove them thirty leagues from Panuco where they lost some ships, and the others were driven disabled ashore, where, had they not found the people at peace, and ready to carry them on their backs, and serve them, in a Spanish town, they would have all perished, even had there been no other hostilities. It

[1] *Lobos marinos* are sometimes called sea-dogs. The figs were the fruit of the nopal or Mexican cactus, commonly called *tunas*, which are very refreshing.

was thus a great good fortune to find that country at peace.

Expedition to South Coast Provinces

In the chapter before this, Most Excellent Prince, I related how, during my march after the pacification of the province of Panuco, the province of Tututepeque, which had rebelled, had been again conquered, and all that was done there. I received news of a province, called Impilcingo, which is near the South Sea, and which is much the same as Tututepeque in the mountainous and rugged character of its country; and the equally war-like inhabitants had done much mischief to the vassals of Your Cæsarian Majesty on the border of their country; and these had come to complain of them and ask for help. Although my people were not rested, as the road from one sea to the other is two hundred leagues, I immediately assembled twenty-five horsemen and eighty foot soldiers, whom I sent to that province with one of my captains; I instructed him to seek to win the inhabitants by peaceful means, and if unsuccessful to fight them. He went there, and had several encounters with them, but, on account of the ruggedness of the country, it was impossible to conquer it entirely. I had also ordered him, in the same instructions, that, having accomplished this, he should go to the city of Zacatula, and, to proceed with his people and those whom he might collect there to the province of Coliman, where, as I have related in the preceding chapters, they had routed and captured the people who had come from the province of Mechuacan; and to seek to win them by kindness, but if he could not, to conquer them. He departed, and altogether, with the people he took, and those whom he collected there, he assembled fifty horsemen and one hundred and fifty footmen and marched to the said province down the coast by the South Sea about sixty leagues from the city of Zacatula. He pacified several

towns along the road, and reached the said province, finding, at thc place where the other captain had been routed, many warriors, who were expecting him, confident that they could treat him as they had done the other. Our Lord was pleased that the victory in this encounter should be for us, none of ours being killed, although many men and horses were wounded; the enemy paid dearly for the mischief they had done, and this punishment was sufficient, without further fighting to bring the whole country suing immediately for peace; not merely that province, but many other neighbouring ones, which came and offered themselves as vassals of Your Cæsarian Majesty, namely: Aliman, Colimante, and Ceguatan. He wrote me from there all that had happened, and I ordered him to seek a good site to found a town, which he should call Coliman like the province, and I sent him the nominations for alcaldes and municipal officers, directing him to visit the towns and peoples of those provinces and bring me the fullest reports of the secrets of the country. When he returned, he brought this report, as well as certain samples of pearls; and, in the name of Your Majesty, I divided the towns and those provinces amongst the settlers who remained there, who numbered twenty-five horsemen and one hundred and twenty foot soldiers. In his description of these provinces, therc was news of a very good port on that coast, which greatly pleased me because they are few: he likewise brought me an account of the chiefs of the province of Ccguatan, who affirm that there is an island inhabited only by women without any men, and that, at given times, men from the mainland visit them; if they conceive, they keep the female children to which they give birth, but the males they throw away. This island is ten days' journey from the province, and many of them went thither and saw it, and told me also that it is very rich in pearls and gold. I shall strive to ascertain

the truth, and, when I am able to do so, I shall make a full account to Your Majesty.[1]

On returning from the province of Panuco, and while in a town called Tuzapan, the two Spaniards arrived, whom I had sent with some natives of Temixtitan and others of Soconusco (which latter is on the coast of the South Sea, near where Pedrarias Davila is Your Highnesses's Governor, two hundred leagues from this great city of Temixtitan) to obtain information of some towns, about which I have heard for a long time, and which are called Uclaclan and Guatemala, and which are more than seventy leagues distant from this province of Soconusco. There came with these Spaniards more than one hundred of the inhabitants of those two towns, sent by their chiefs to declare themselves subjects and vassals of Your Imperial Majesty. I received them in Your Royal name and assured them that, if they remained faithful to their pledge, they would be well treated and favoured by me and my people in Your Majesty's name; and I gave them some presents of things which they esteem, not only for themselves, but also for their chief, and sent two other Spaniards back with them to provide everything necessary along the road. Since then, I have learned from certain Spaniards in the province of Soconusco, that those cities with their provinces, and another, called Chiapan, near there, have not kept faith, but are molesting the towns of Soconusco because they are our friends. On the other hand, the Christians have written to me that they constantly send messengers to excuse themselves, saying that these things had been done by others, and that they had no part in it. So, to learn the truth of this, I despatched Pedro de Alvarado, with eighty odd horsemen

[1] The island of the Amazons turned out to be a myth. Another such island is mentioned in Pigafetta's letter on Magellan's voyage as existing in the Malay Archipelago, called Acoloro near Java, but he says that he only heard of it from a pilot (*Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo*, Ant. Pigafetta, translated by A. Robertson, 1905).

and two hundred foot soldiers, amongst whom were many crossbowmen and musketeers; he took four field pieces and artillery, and a great supply of ammunition and powder. I likewise had an armada of ships built, of which I sent Cristobal de Olid as captain, he having come with me to go to the North Coast, where I ordered him to make a settlement on the Cape of Hibueras, which is sixty leagues from the Bay of Ascension, beyond what is called Yucatan, on the coast of the mainland towards Darien[1]: for I have information that that country is very rich, and many pilots believe that a strait links that Bay with the other sea, and this is the one thing in the world which I most desire to discover, and which I think would render greatest service to Your Cæsarian Majesty. As these two captains were about to start, with all preparations for the march completed, I received a message from each of them, from Santistevan del Puerto which I had founded

Cortes named Captain-General

[1] This coast was first reached by Rodrigo de Bastidas and Nicuesa in 1502; the survivors of the expedition of Nicuesa and Ojeda founded a town there which Encisa named Santa Maria Antigua, in honour of the Blessed Virgin venerated under that title in Seville; Vasco Nuñez de Balboa was Governor, and Pizarro, who later conquered Peru, was one of Ojeda's companions. The hardships endured by Ojeda and his men were beyond all human endurance, and the description of their sufferings from disease, famine, shipwreck, and rebellions within the colony, and fighting the Indians without, is one of the most harrowing tales of human misery and human courage anywhere to be read. Cortes was providentially prevented from joining this expedition by a swelling on his knee which laid him up. The pilot and cosmographer, Juan de la Cosa, was killed by a poisoned arrow. Ojeda himself survived, but died poor and obscure in San Domingo. Gomara (*Hist. Gen.*) says that he became a monk, but Las Casas who mentions his wish to be buried under the threshold of the Church of St. Francisco, so that all who entered might tread upon his grave as an act of expiation for his sins of pride, does not mention that he belonged to any religious order.

The end of Nicuesa was even more unfortunate, for he was driven from Darien by the rebellious colonists, and, putting to sea with a few followers in an unseaworthy vessel, poorly provisioned, was never seen again.

on the River Panuco, telling me that the Governor Francisco de Garay had arrived at Panuco with one hundred and twenty horse, four hundred foot soldiers, and numerous artillery, proclaiming himself, through an interpreter, whom he had brought with him, governor of the country; he told the Indians he would revenge the ills they had suffered at my hands in the recent war, and that they should join with him in driving out those Spaniards whom I had placed there, and that he would help them; besides many other scandalous things which considerably agitated the natives. To confirm my suspicion of his understanding with the Admiral and Diego Velasquez, a few days later, there arrived at the river a caravel from the island of Cuba having on board certain friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, and a servant of the Bishop of Burgos, who said that he came as factor for Yucatan; and the rest of the company was composed of creatures and relatives of Diego Velasquez and of the Admiral. When I heard this news, although I had a lame arm from a fall from my horse, and was in bed, I decided to go to meet him and arrange the difficulty, and I immediately sent Pedro de Alvarado ahead of me with all the people he had ready for his march, while I prepared to start in two days. My bed and baggage were already on the road and had gone ten leagues from Mexico to a place where I was to join them, when, towards midnight, there arrived a courier from Vera Cruz who brought me letters,[1] which had arrived from Spain in a ship, and

[1] The fortunate arrival of the Emperor's letter forbidding Garay to interfere in any way with Cortes's administration, or to settle any lands already occupied by him, nipped this very serious difficulty in the bud. Alvarado's prompt success with Ovalle, who yielded with scarcely a show of resistance, suggests that a little golden diplomacy may have been used with him and his men, as had been successfully employed with Narvaez's followers under similar circumstances. The ship's captains were equally amenable, and Grijalba could not make good his intention to fight. The exhibition of the royal *cedula* rendered Garay powerless, his prestige amongst his followers was hope-

with them a *cedula*, signed with the royal name of Your Majesty. By this latter the said Governor Francisco de Garay was commanded not to meddle in the affairs of the said river region, or in any way where I had settled, as Your Majesty desired that I should hold them in Your Royal name; for which I kiss the royal feet of Your Cæsarian Majesty a hundred thousand times. The arrival of this *cedula* interrupted my journey, which was of

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lessly damaged, and, meanwhile, their imaginations had been so fired by the alluring tales of Alvarado and Ocampo that the majority were deaf to their leader's commands and entreaties. They had the technical excuse that they had engaged for an expedition to Panuco under certain stipulated conditions, but for nowhere else, and, as to Panuco, Garay could not go, their contract no longer bound them. Ocampo, to whom Garay appealed to uphold his authority, made a show of beating the country for fugitives, but was careful to collect only the least desirable men, those known as adherents of Velasquez, whom he was glad to see leave the country. Reduced to these straits, Garay went to Mexico where Cortes played the magnanimous, receiving him as an old friend and arranged a marriage between his daughter Catalina and Garay's eldest son.

On Christmas eve, Garay assisted at midnight mass with Cortes and breakfasted with him afterwards; the same day he was seized with violent pains and died a few days later; so opportune did his death seem to some, that whispers of poison were not wanting. The rising of the Indians of Panuco provoked by Garay's lawless followers under command of his son, whose authority they ignored, was one of the most formidable of its kind, and its suppression by Alvarado was marked by the ferocious cruelty characteristic of him. Ocampo, as lieutenant of Cortes, presided as judge at the sham trial, passing barbarous sentence on about four hundred prisoners, the chiefs and principal men of the tribes. Of these some were burned, while others were hanged, and, in order that the lesson might not be lost on the Indians, they were compelled to be present at this ghastly execution which took place *en masse*.

The proposed marriage between Doña Catalina and the son of Garay never took place, for she is mentioned in the bull of legitimisation, in 1529, as a maiden: and, in her father's will, made in 1547, she is mentioned as being in a convent in Coyohuacan. It is difficult to identify her mother, for Archbishop Lorenzana says she was the daughter of Cortes's first wife Catalina Xuarez; others affirm that her mother was Marina de Escobar, and still others that she was the daughter of Doña Elvira (daughter of Montezuma), in which case she would have been an infant at the time of her betrothal to Garay.

advantage to my health, because for sixty days I had hardly slept, and was so overcome with work that to travel at such a time was to risk my life.

I had however, put all considerations aside and held it better to die on the march than to live and be the cause of such scandals and troubles and deaths as would notoriously have followed; so I immediately sent Diego de Ocampo, alcalde mayor, with the said *cedula* to follow Pedro de Alvarado, to whom I also sent a letter ordering him on no account to go where the people of the adelantado were, so as to avoid disturbances; and I ordered the said alcalde mayor to notify the adelantado of that *cedula* and to let me know immediately what he said. He set out as quickly as possible and reached the province of the Guatescas, through which Pedro de Alvarado had passed into the interior of the province. When the latter learned that the alcalde mayor had come, and that I had remained behind, he told Ocampo that one of Garay's captains, called Gonzalo Dovalle, was scouring the country with twenty-two horsemen, pillaging the villages, and disturbing the Indians, and that he had been told that this captain had placed spies on the road where Alvarado must pass; all of which greatly vexed the said Alvarado and convinced him that Gonzalo Dovalle intended to attack him. He pushed on ahead with his people to a village called Las Lajas, where he found Gonzalo Dovalle with his people. Alvarado spoke with him and told him that he knew what he had been doing, and marvelled much at it, because the governor and his captains had in no way intended to offend the people of Garay, but on the contrary planned to aid them and furnish them with whatever they might need; however, since things had taken another turn, he asked him as a favour, and in order to ensure that no scandal or mischief should ensue amongst the people on one side or the other, not to take it ill if his arms and horses were sequestrated

until some agreement should be reached. Gonzalo Dovalle excused himself, assuring Alvarado that he had been misinformed as to what had happened, but accepted the conditions which were imposed; thus the two troops were united, the men living and eating together without any dissension. As soon as the alcalde mayor learned this, he ordered one of my secretaries, Francisco de Orduña, who had gone with him, to go to the captains, Pedro de Alvarado and Dovalle, taking an order to return the arms and horses to their owners, and to tell them it was my intention to aid and favour them in everything they might require, but that they should not make trouble in the country; he further counselled Alvarado to come to a good understanding with Dovalle and not to mix in any way in his affairs; and this was done.

Events at Santistevan

At the same time, Most Powerful Lord, it happened that the ships of the said adelantado, which were lying at the mouth of the River Panuco were a menace to the inhabitants of the town of Santistevan, which I had founded three leagues up the river where all the ships which arrived at that port anchored. Seeing this, my lieutenant in that town, Pedro de Vallejo, wishing to forestall any danger arising from possible troubles with those ships, required the captains and masters of them to go up the river peacefully without disturbing the country, and he also required them that, if they had any authority from Your Majesty to settle or land in that country or for any other purpose, they should exhibit it, protesting that it would be complied with in every respect as Your Majesty commanded. The captains and masters answered these requirements, refusing everything the lieutenant commanded, which obliged the latter to issue a second order to them, insisting anew on all that he had ordered in the first requirement under certain penalties; to this mandate they replied as before. Seeing there-

fore that their remaining with the ships at the mouth of the river for the space of two months or more would result in causing scandal, not only amongst the Spaniards, but also among the natives, two masters of the said ships, one Castromocho, and the other Martin de San Juan a Guipuzcoan, secretly sent messengers to the lieutenant telling him they wished for peace and would obey his commands, which they thought just, and that they would do whatever he ordered them, adding that the other ships would likewise obey him. Upon receiving this information, my lieutenant decided to go aboard the vessels, accompanied by only five men; he was received by the pilots with all respect, and from there he sent to Juan de Grijalba, the commander of the fleet, on board the flag-ship and summoned him to obey the orders which had already been communicated to him. The said captain not only refused to obey, but he ordered the other ships to unite with his and surround the other two above mentioned and fire upon them with their artillery and sink them: this order was made public, and everybody heard it, and my lieutenant responded by ordering the artillery of the two ships which obeyed him to be prepared. Meanwhile, the captains and masters of the ships about the flag-ship refused to obey Grijalba's orders, seeing which, he sent a notary, called Vicente Lopez, to my lieutenant to arrange matters. My lieutenant answered that he came there merely to negotiate peace and prevent the scandals which the presence of these ships outside the port provoked, as they seemed like pirates ready to make a raid on the dominions of Your Majesty, which sounded very badly, advancing other reasons in support of this opinion. These arguments prevailed upon the notary Vicente Lopez to return with the reply to Captain Grijalba whom he informed of all he had heard from the lieutenant, persuading the captain to obey, for it was clear that the said

lieutenant was the justice of that province for Your Majesty, and the said Captain Grijalba knew, that neither the Governor, Francisco de Garay, nor he himself had presented any royal provisions which the lieutenant and inhabitants of Santistevan were bound to obey, and that it was a very ugly thing to act in this way; for they were behaving like pirates in Your Majesty's dominions. Convinced by these reasons, Captain Grijalba, and the captains and masters of the other ships, obeyed the lieutenant and went up the river to where ships usually anchored.

Upon arriving at the port, the lieutenant ordered the said Juan de Grijalba to be imprisoned for the disobedience he had shown to his mandates but when this imprisonment became known to him, the alcalde mayor immediately ordered the said Juan Grijalba to be set free the next day and that he and all the others should be treated kindly; and thus it was done. In like manner, the said alcalde mayor wrote to Francisco de Garay, who was in another port ten or twelve leagues further South, telling him that I was unable to come and see him but that I had sent him with my power of attorney to come to some agreement and exhibit our provisions on one side and on the other so as to decide what might best advance Your Majesty's service. As soon as Francisco de Garay saw the letter of the alcalde mayor he came to meet him and was very well received, and his people were provided with all necessaries. At this meeting, after having discussed and seen the provisions and the *cedula* which Your Majesty had so graciously sent me, the said adelantado obeyed it, and declared that in compliance with it, he, with his people, would retire to his ships and go to settle in some other country beyond the boundaries designated in Your Majesty's *cedula:* and since I wished to assist him, he besought the alcalde mayor to collect all his people, for many of them wished

Juan de Grijalba Imprisoned

to stop there and others had gone off, and also to supply him with provisions for the ships and people of which he stood in need. The alcalde mayor immediately provided everything he asked, and it was published by the public crier, in the port where most of the people of both sides were staying, that all persons who had come in the armada of the adelantado, Francisco de Garay, should join him under penalty that, whoever did not, if he were a horseman, he should lose his arms and horse and be imprisoned by the adelantado, and if a foot soldier, he should receive one hundred stripes and likewise be imprisoned.

Difficulties of Francisco de Garay

The adelantado likewise asked the alcalde mayor that, inasmuch as some of his people had sold their arms and horses in the port of Santistevan, and in the port where they stopped, and elsewhere in the neighbourhood, they might be returned to him, because without arms and horses his people would be of no use; the alcalde mayor ordered the horses and arms to be taken wherever they might be found and to be returned to the adelantado. The alcalde mayor also sent out and seized all those who had deserted, and many were thus captured and brought in. He also sent the alguacil mayor of Santistevan, with a secretary of mine, to ensure in that town and port, the same diligence in proclaiming by the public crier and capturing deserters and in collecting all the provisions possible for the ships of the adelantado; besides which he ordered the arms and horses which had been sold there also to be taken and brought back to the adelantado. All this was done with great diligence, and the adelantado left for the port to embark, while the alcalde mayor remained behind with his people so as not to make too great demands on the supplies of the port, and in order to provide the better for everything; and he stopped there six or seven days to see that all I had ordered was executed.

The alcalde mayor wrote to the adelantado, that if he desired anything else, to let him know, as he was returning to Mexico where I was; and the adelantado sent a messenger to say that he had not been able to get ready to sail, as six ships were wanting, and those which remained were not seaworthy, and that he was preparing a statement which would prove to me how impossible it was for him to leave the country. He told him at the same time that his people raised a thousand objections, pretending that they were not obliged to follow him, and that they had appealed from the commands which my alcalde mayor had given them, saying they were not obliged to comply with them for sixteen or seventeen reasons which they assigned; one of them was that some of his people had already died of starvation, and other not very weighty reasons touching his own person. He likewise stated that all his precautions to keep his men together were useless, as they disappeared in the evening without coming back next morning, and those who were one day delivered to him as prisoners again deserted the next day when they got their liberty; and it had happened that between night and morning two hundred men had left. For this reason, the adelantado besought my alcalde mayor most earnestly not to leave until they had seen each other, because he wished to come with him to this city to see me, and said that, if the alcalde mayor left him thus he would drown himself in despair. After receiving this letter the alcalde mayor decided to wait for him, and, two days later, when he arrived, they sent a messenger to me, by whom the alcalde made known to me that the adelantado was coming to see me in this city, and that they would come slowly as far as Cicoaque, which is on the border of this province, where they would await my answer. The adelantado also wrote me, describing the bad condition of his ships and the ill-will his people displayed, and said that he believed I might

find a remedy by providing some of my people and whatever else he might need; for he was aware that nobody else could help him and hence he had decided to come to see me: and that he offered me his eldest son with all he possessed, hoping to leave him with me as my son-in-law by marriage with a small daughter of mine.

Meanwhile, when they were about starting for this city, it being clear to the alcalde mayor that some very suspicious persons had come in the armada of Francisco de Garay, friends and servants of Diego Velasquez, who had shown themselves hostile to my undertakings, and, being aware that they could not safely remain in the said province, without stirring up tumults and disturbances, he ordered, by virtue of the royal provisions Your Majesty sent me authorising me to expel all such scandalous persons from the country, that Gonzalo Figueroa, Alonzo de Mendoza, Antonio de la Cerda, Juan de Avila, Lorenzo de Ulloa, Taborda, Juan de Grijalba, Juan de Medina, and others, should leave. After this was done, the adelantado and the alcalde mayor came as far as the town of Cicoaque, where they received my answer to the letters they had sent me in which I wrote that I rejoiced much at the arrival of the adelantado, and that, on reaching this city, we would come to an amicable understanding about all he had written to me, with which he would be fully satisfied. I had likewise ordered the chiefs of the towns along the road to provide him fully with everything necessary.

Concerning Francisco de Garay

When the adelantado arrived here, I received him with every hospitality such as I would have shown for my brother, for I was sincerely grieved at the loss of his ships and at the rebellion of his people, and I offered him my services, truly desiring to do everything possible for him. He wished very much to carry out the plan he had written me about the marriage, and again importuned me so persistently, that, in order to please

him, I agreed to everything he asked. So, with mutula consent, a binding agreement was made, under oath, leading to the consummation of the said marriage, on condition that Your Majesty, after learning the contents of our agreement, should approve of it; thus, besides our ancient friendship, we were joined by the mutual contracts and engagements which we made for our children, and were both satisfied with the conditions thereof, especially the adelantado.

In the preceding chapter, Most Powerful Lord, I told Your Catholic Majesty of all my alcalde mayor had done to collect the adelantado's men, who were scattered over the country, and the steps he had taken for this purpose, which, in spite of their being so many, were not sufficient to calm the dissatisfaction felt against Francisco de Garay; for they feared they would, in accordance with the orders published by the public crier, be forced to accompany him. The deserters had penetrated to the interior of the country in bands of three and six together, in different places, so that they could not be captured. This led to much disturbance amongst the Indians, who saw the Spaniards scattered over the country, and the many disorders, which they aroused by seizing the native women and supplies, and to a general rising of the whole country; for the natives believed what the adelantado had published on his arrival, namely: that there existed dissension among the different commanders, as I have already related to Your Majesty. Thus, the Indians astutely got information as to where those several Spaniards were, and, both by day and night, they would fall upon them in the towns where they were scattered and, taking them unawares and disarmed, they easily killed a good number of them. Their boldness grew to such a pitch that they came to Santistevan del Puerto, which I had settled in the name of Your Majesty, where they pressed the inhabitants very hard with their fierce

attacks, so much so that the latter gave themselves up for lost, as indeed they would have been had they not been prepared and collected where they could fortify themselves and withstand their adversaries. When things were in this state, I received news of what had happened by a messenger, who had escaped on foot from the contests and told me that all the province of Panuco had rebelled and had killed many of the adelantado's Spaniards who had remained there, and also some householders of the town I had established there in the name of Your Majesty; and, from his account, I fear that none of the Spaniards survive, for which God our Lord knows what I suffer! No such occurrence can happen in these parts without costing much and risking the loss of all. The adelantado was much impressed by this news, not only because it seemed to him that he was the cause of it, but also because he had left his son in that province with all his possessions; so much so indeed, that his chagrin brought on an illness from which he died within the space and term of three days.

That Your Highness may be better informed of what occurred, I relate that the Spaniard, who first brought the news of the rising of the natives of Panuco, told me that he, a foot soldier, and three horsemen, had been surprised by the Indians in a village called Tacetuco[1]; that these Indians had killed the foot soldier, two of the horsemen, and the horse of the third, and that he and the surviving horseman had fled under cover of night; they had observed a house in the village where a lieutenant, fifteen horsemen, and forty foot soldiers should have waited for them, but the house was burned

Rebellion in Panuco

[1] Tanjuco: a small village, one hundred and twenty-seven miles from the mouth of the Panuco, and less than half that distance overland. The Panuco country was carefully visited and described, in 1826, by Captain Lyon, whose *Journal* contains much interesting information about the land and people. He found the Guasteca language was spoken there.

and he believed, according to certain indications, that these men had been massacred. I had waited six or seven days for any other news when a messenger arrived from the lieutenant in a town, called Tenertequipa,[1] which is subject to this city and is on the boundaries of that province; by his letter he made known to me that, while he was in Tacetuco with fifteen horsemen and forty foot soldiers expecting some people to join him preparatory to crossing the river to pacify certain towns, his quarters had been surrounded just before dawn, one night, by a great number of people who set fire to them. Though he and his men had mounted very quickly they had been taken off their guard for they had believed in the friendship of those people; and he thinks all were killed but himself and two other horsemen who had escaped; his own horse had been killed and one of his men had to take him up behind him. Two leagues from there, they met the alcalde of that town who came to their assistance with some people, but they did not tarry long and left the province as quickly as possible. He had, however, no news, either of those who had stayed in the town, or of the men of Francisco de Garay, but he believed there was not one left alive.

As I have told Your Majesty, after the adelantado had proclaimed to the natives throughout the province that I was no longer to have anything to do with them, since he was the Governor whom they must obey, and that by uniting with him they would expel all my Spaniards, the town had revolted, and the natives refused afterwards to serve the Spaniards, even killing some whom they met alone on the roads. The lieutenant believed that what had been done was by concerted action of all the Indians and, as they had attacked him and his people, that they must have done the same to the inhabitants of the town, as well as to those who were

[1] Possibly Tantoyuca.

scattered amongst the neighbouring villages, all of whom were ignorant of any such revolt, seeing that the natives had, until then, served them willingly. Having satisfied myself by this news that a rebellion existed in that province, and having heard of the death of those Spaniards, I sent, with the greatest possible haste, a Spanish captain in command of fifty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, crossbowmen and musketeers, with four pieces of artillery, much powder, and ammunition, and two native chiefs of this city each with fifteen thousand of their warriors. I ordered the captain to march without stopping anywhere to the town of Santistevan del Puerto to obtain news of the inhabitants there, as perhaps they had been besieged; and if so, to help them. This was done with all haste, and, after entering the province, the captain fought the Indians at two places; and God, our Lord, having given him the victory, he continued his march to the said town, where he found twenty-two horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers who had been besieged there. They had defended themselves with certain pieces of artillery against six or seven attacks, although they could not have held out much longer as it had been done only with the greatest difficulty; and had the captain I sent been delayed three days more not one of them would have been left alive, for they were already dying of hunger. They had sent one of the adelantado's brigantines to Vera Cruz to let me know their condition by that way (as they could not send news by any other messenger) and also to bring them provisions, which afterwards was done, although they had already been succoured by my people. My captain there learned that Francisco de Garay's people, left in a town, called Tamequil,[1] in all about a hundred foot soldiers and horsemen, had been killed, without one escaping, with the exception of an Indian from the island of Jamaica. He managed to escape through the forest,

[1] Possibly Tamuy or Tancanhuici.

and from him the news of how they were attacked at night was obtained. It was ascertained that two hundred and ten men of the adelantado's people had been killed, and also forty-three of the inhabitants I had left in that town, who were going about their villages which they held under *encomienda*[1]; it was even believed that the adelantado's people were more numerous, though they could not remember them all. There were altogether, including those whom the captain had taken with him and the lieutenants and the alcalde's people and the inhabitants, eighty horsemen who were divided into three companies. During the war they carried on in the province, they captured about four hundred chiefs and notable persons, besides others of lower class, all of whom—I speak of the chiefs—were burned,[2] having confessed that they had instigated the war and that each had participated in the killing of Spaniards; the other persons were then liberated, and, through them, the people were brought back to the towns. The captain then appointed, in Your Majesty's name, new chiefs from among the rightful heirs, according to their laws of inheritance. At that time I received letters from the captain and other persons who were with him assuring me that—God be praised—the whole province was entirely pacified and subdued, the natives serving them faithfully; and I believe the past ill-feeling will be forgotten and there will be peace for the whole year.

Your Cæsarian Majesty may believe that these people are so turbulent that any novelty or preparation for disturbance excites them, for they have been used to

[1] See Appendix at the close of this Letter.

[2] Some authors have sought to cast doubts upon the number burned, Herrera even reducing them to thirty, but the language of Cortes seems to be sufficiently explicit. To drive the lesson well home, the Indians were all assembled to witness this frightful execution of their relatives. Gonzalo de Sandoval was the Captain commanding in this war, and it is with reluctance that we record this black deed against his otherwise exceptionally fair fame.

rebelling against their chiefs and never lost an occasion to do this.

Expedition to Honduras

In the past chapters, Very Catholic Lord, I said that, when I heard of the adelantado's arrival at Panuco, I had prepared a certain armada of ships and people to send to the Cape of Hibueras, and gave the reason which moved me to do this; and that the arrival of the said adelantado had caused me to suspend things, believing that he was endeavouring to take possession of this country by his authority, and in order to resist any such attempt I needed all my people. Having terminated the affairs of the adelantado, although a great outlay for the payment of seamen and provisions for the ships and people was necessary, it seemed to me that Your Majesty's service required that I should fulfil the intention I had conceived; so I bought five more large ships and a brigantine, and gathered four hundred men, with artillery, ammunitions, arms, and other provisions and stores. I sent two of my agents to the island of Cuba with eight thousand *pesos* of gold to buy horses and provisions, not only for this first voyage, but also to have them in readiness for the return of the ships, so that there would be no excuse for not following my orders; and I also did this to avoid demanding provisions from the natives of the country, for it was better to give to them rather than to take from them. They departed, with these instructions, from the port of San Juan de Chalchiqueca on the 11th of January, 1524, being obliged to go first to Havana, which is the point of the island of Cuba where they are to get what they require, especially the horses, and to assemble the ships there from whence—with God's blessing—they will continue their route to Hibueras.[1] Upon their arrival at the first

[1] Olid's expedition left Vera Cruz on January 11, 1524, and stopped first at Cuba, where the commander fell under the influence of Diego Velasquez, who incited him to throw off the authority of Cortes and act independently. The first news of his insubordination

port, they are to land the people, horses, and provisions, and fortify themselves, with their artillery—of which they take plenty—in the best position they can choose, and there establish a settlement; three of the largest ships are then to go to Cuba, to the port of Trinidad, because that is the best place and because one of my agents has everything in readiness there which the commander of the expedition may require. The other smaller ships and the brigantine, with the chief pilot—who is a cousin of mine called Diego Hurtado—in command, are to cruise along the coast of the Ascension Bay, searching for the strait which is believed to be there, and, after discovering everything about it, are to return to wherever Captain Cristobal de Olid may be, sending me one of the ships with an account of what they have discovered so that I may make a complete report of all that has been done to Your Catholic Majesty.

I also said that I had prepared certain people to go with

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was brought to Cortes by the factor, Gonzalo de Salazar, and led to his sending his kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, to recall Olid to his obedience. Olid had sent a part of his forces against Gonzalo de Avila, who was also exploring in that country, and, upon Las Casas's arrival, he temporised, seeing that he could not successfully resist; and while thus gaining time, he sent hurriedly to recall his men. A violent storm drove the ships of Las Casas on the coast, and thus he and his men were easily captured, and, at the same time, Gonzalo de Avila was likewise taken, so Olid's star was in the ascendant. His triumph was short lived, however, for he had rendered himself very unpopular in the colony, of which fact his prisoners, who had complete liberty to go about, with the sole restriction that they were not to carry arms, took advantage to plan a successful rebellion against him. He was captured, and, after a summary trial, was beheaded in the public square of Naco. The *Audiencia* of San Domingo had sought to forestall these conflicts amongst Spaniards, by sending their agent, the bachelor Moreno, to order Las Casas back to Vera Cruz, to put an end to the contests between Olid and Avila, and to stop Pedro de Alvarado, who was marching overland against Olid by order of Cortes. Moreno's proceedings, and those of his companion Ruano, are recounted in the memorial read by the colonists to Cortes, which the latter transcribes in the Fifth Letter for the Emperor's information.

Pedro de Alvarado to those cities of Uclatan [1] and Guatemala which I have mentioned in preceding chapters, and to other provinces of which I have heard beyond them, and also how this had been interrupted by the arrival of Francisco de Garay. Although I had already incurred great expenses for horses and horsemen, artillery and ammunition, as well as for money advanced to help the people, I believed this to be for the service of God, our Lord, and Your Sacred Majesty, and, according to the accounts of those parts which I had received, I expected to discover many new and rich lands and strange inhabitants, so I reverted to my original intention. In addition to what I had already provided for the last expedition, I again fitted out Pedro de Alvarado, and despatched him from this city on the 6th of December, 1523, and he took one hundred and twenty horsemen, so that with his relays, he had one hundred and seventy horses and three hundred foot soldiers of which latter one hundred and thirty were crossbowmen and musketeers; he also took four field pieces of artillery, with plenty of powder and ammunition, and he was accompanied by some chiefs, both of this city and from its neighbourhood, who brought some people with them, though not very many, as the journey was so long.

Expedition to Tehuantepec

I have heard that they arrived in the province of Tecuantepeque on the 12th of January, and that everything was going well. May it please our Lord to guide them and the others, for I readily believe that, acting in His service and in the Royal name of Your Cæsarian Majesty, great success will not be wanting.

I also recommended Pedro de Alvarado always to take special care to send me a complete account of everything that happens to him so that I may report to Your Highness. I am positive from the reports I have had about that country that Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal

[1] Ucatlan.

de Olid will meet each other if they are not separated by the strait.

I would have undertaken many of these expeditions and discovered many of the secrets of this country had I not been hindered by the armadas which have arrived here. I assure Your Sacred Majesty that your service has been much injured, not only because countries have not been discovered, but because much great wealth in gold and pearls has not been procured for Your Royal Treasury. Hereafter, however, if others do not come, I shall strive to recover what has been lost, because nothing which depends upon my efforts shall be left undone; for I certify to Your Cæsarian and Sacred Majesty that, besides having spent all that I possessed, I owe money, which I have taken from the funds of Your Majesty for my expenses, amounting, as Your Majesty may see from my accounts, to sixty thousand *pesos* of gold, besides another twelve thousand which I borrowed from various persons for my household expenses.

Expedition against the Zapotecas and Mixtecas

I said in the foregoing chapter that some of the natives of neighbouring provinces who were near about, and who served the inhabitants of the town of Espiritu Santo, had revolted and killed certain Spaniards, and that, both for the purpose of reducing them to the royal service of Your Majesty, as well as for winning over others of their neighbours, as the people of the town are not strong enough to hold what has been won and conquered, I sent a captain with thirty horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, some of them crossbowmen and musketeers, together with two field pieces and provisions and ammunition and powder. He left on the 8th of December, 1523. I have thus far had no news of them, but expect to obtain good results from this expedition for the service of God, our Lord, and Your Majesty, and hope that they will discover many secrets in that country, which is a

small territory lying between the one conquered by Pedro de Alvarado and the other by Cristobal de Olid. Including this small bit, the land conquered along the North Sea comprises a territory of more than four hundred leagues which is now subject to Your Majesty, and on the southern coast the conquered country extends from one sea to the other, without interruption, for more than five hundred leagues, with the exception of two provinces, one of which is called Zaputecas and the other Mixes, which lie between the province of Tecuantepeque and that of Chinanta and Guaxaca and that of Guazaqualco. The mountains here are rugged and difficult, so that they can hardly be crossed, even on foot, for twice I have sent people to conquer them but they have never been able to do anything against these Indians, who are well armed and entrenched in their mountains. They fight with lances twenty-five and thirty palms long, very thick, and well made, with points of flint,[1] and they have defended themselves with these and killed some Spaniards, and have done, and are doing, great mischief to their neighbours who are Your Majesty's vassals, assaulting them by night and burning their towns and killing them; to such an extent have they done this that many towns have rebelled and joined with them. To prevent this spreading, although I am at present short of men, I collected one hundred and fifty foot soldiers—the cavalry being useless—most of them crossbowmen and musketeers, and four field pieces with necessary ammunition. This force I put under the command of Rodrigo Rangel, alcalde of Espiritu Santo, who, last year, had already marched against these same Indians but could not rout them on account of the rainy season which obliged him to return after two months spent in their province.

[1] Obsidian: a vitreous mineral substance, harder than glass, which was called *iztli* by the Aztecs. They gave it such a keen edge that it served for knives and razors as well as spearheads.

He left this city with his people on the 5th of February of this present year, and I believe that—God willing—since they take a good equipment and go at a good season with many skilful Indian warriors of this city and its neighbourhood, they will put an end to the strife there, which will redound greatly to the Imperial Crown of Your Majesty; for not only do these people render no service but they molest those who are well disposed. The country is very rich in gold mines, and, once these people are pacified, our settlers say that they will get possession of them and reduce to slavery those people, who had once offered themselves to Your Majesty, and had afterwards rebelled and had killed the Spaniards, and done every mischief. I ordered that those who were captured should be branded with Your Highness's mark, and, after separating the part belonging to Your Majesty, that the rest should be distributed amongst the members of the expedition.

Most Excellent Lord, I may assure Your Royal Excellency that the least of these expeditions cost me more than five thousand *pesos* of gold, and those of Pedro de Alvarado and Cristobal de Olid cost more than fifty thousand *pesos* in monies, besides other outlays from my property which are not accounted or set down in the memoranda; but if it will only conduce to the service of Your Cæsarian Majesty, although it should cost my own life I would deem it sufficient recompense to ever devote myself to the service of Your Highness.

Ship-building

In the last account, and also in this, I have mentioned to Your Majesty that I had begun to build four ships on the South Sea, and, as some time has passed since they were begun, it may seem to Your Royal Highness that I have been slow in finishing them; but I now give Your Sacred Majesty the cause, which is that the port on the South Sea where these ships are building, is two hundred leagues, and even more, from the ports on the

North Sea where all material which arrives in this New Spain is delivered, and there are very steep mountain passes in some parts, and in others great rivers, over which everything required for the said ships must be carried, as nothing can be obtained elsewhere. Another thing also happened, which was that when I had got together the sails, cordage, nails, anchors, tar, tallow, tow, bitumen, oil, and everything else required, and stored them in a house in that port, it took fire and everything was burned, except the anchors, which could not burn. I have now again begun, as a ship arrived from Castile, four months since, bringing me everything necessary for the ships; as, foreseeing the possibility of what had happened, I had already ordered material to be sent. And I certify to Your Cæsarian Majesty that the ships cost me to-day, before launching them on the water, more than eight thousand *pesos* of gold, without the extra outlays, but now—our Lord be praised—they are in such a condition that, between the Feast of the Holy Ghost and that of St. John in June, they will be ready for navigation if the tar does not fail me, for I have not been able to replace that which was burned, though I have ordered more to be sent me. I attach more importance to these ships than I can say, for I am positive that—God willing—I shall discover for Your Majesty more kingdoms and dominions than all those discovered up till now, and that, with His guidance, my projects may succeed according to my desires, and Your Highness will become the Sovereign of the World.

After God our Lord granted that this great city of Temixtitan should be subdued, it did not seem to me well to live in it, for many reasons, so I brought all the people to a town, called Coyuacan, on the shore of the lake which I have already mentioned. As I always desired that this city should be rebuilt, because of its great and marvellous position, I strove to collect the natives, who,

since the war, were scattered in many parts, and, though I still held the ruler of it a prisoner, I charged a captain-general of his, whom I knew in the days of Montezuma, to repeople it; and, in order that he might enjoy greater authority, I gave him the same office he had held in the time of his sovereign, which is that of *Ciguacoat*, meaning "lieutenant of the sovereign," and, at the same time, I appointed other personages whom I knew to the principal offices which they had formerly held. I gave these new officers such lordships of territory and people as were necessary to maintain themselves, though not as much as they had before, or enough to make them dangerous; and I always take care to honour and favour them. They have done very well, so that now the city is peopled with about thirty thousand households, and is just as orderly in the market-places as it formerly was; moreover I have given them such liberties and immunities that they will increase in great numbers; for they live quite as they please and many artisans live by their work among the Spaniards, such as carpenters, masons, stone-cutters, silversmiths, and others. Merchants trade in safety, and others live as fishermen, which is an important business in this city, and others by agriculture, for there are already many who have their plantations sown with all kinds of vegetables which we have obtained from Spain. I assure Your Cæsarian Majesty that, could we but obtain plants and seeds from Spain, and if Your Highness would be pleased to order them sent to us as I besought in my other account, the ability of these natives in cultivating the soil and making plantations would very shortly produce such abundance that great profit would accrue to the Imperial Crown of Your Highness; for even greater revenues can be procured for Your Sacred Majesty in these parts than what Your Highness now enjoys in those you possess in the name of God our Lord. Your Highness may rest assured

that I shall strive with all my mind and power to achieve this end.

Fortification of Mexico

Immediately after the capture of this city, I took steps to establish a fort in the water where the brigantines might be kept safely, and from where I might control the whole city should there be any occasion for it, and the exit and entrance remain in my hands. It was constructed in such wise that, although I have seen some forts and arsenals, I have seen none that equals it, and many others affirm the same as myself; and it has been built in this wise: on the side towards the lake, it has two very strong towers, provided with loop-holes: these two towers are joined by a building in the form of three naves, where brigantines are kept, and which have doors towards the water for going in and out; and all this building is provided also with loop-holes, and on the end towards the city there is another large tower, with many rooms above and below for offensive and defensive operations. But, as I shall send a plan to Your Majesty to make this more clearly understood, I shall give no more particulars about it, but, holding these with the ships and artillery, peace or war is in our hands as we choose. Once this building was finished, everything seemed secure for re-peopling the city, so I returned there with all my people, and distributed plots of ground to the householders; and to each of those who had been conquerors I gave, in the name of Your Highness, a plot of ground in recompense for their services, besides the one they received as citizens.[1] And so well and quickly does work go on in these parts, that many of the houses are finished and others are well advanced, for there is an abundance of stone, lime, wood, and bricks which the natives make,

[1] Tlatelolco and Popotla were the quarters of the new town assigned to the Indians. A plan was drawn in which each concession of ground was marked; one lot was given to anyone who applied, on the condition that he should build a house and live there for four consecutive years. Each of the conquerors, as Cortes says, was entitled to two lots.

so that the houses are mostly large and good, and Your Sacred Majesty may believe that, within five years, this will be the most nobly populated city which exists in all the civilised world, and will have the finest buildings.

The town where the Spaniards have settled is distinct from that of the natives, for an arm of water separates us, although there are bridges of wood which connect them. There are two great native markets, one in their quarter and one in the Spanish quarter,[1] where every sort of provisions can be bought; for the people come from all over the country to sell, and there is no scarcity as sometimes happened in the days of its prosperity. It is true that now there are no jewels of gold, silver, or feather work and other rich things, as there used to be, although some small miserable pieces of gold and silver appear, but not as formerly.

Owing to Diego Velasquez's ill-will towards me, and that of Don Juan de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, who is influenced by him, and in consequence of the orders of the officials of the Casa de la Contratacion of Seville, particularly Juan Lopez de Recalde, accountant of it, on whom everything in the time of the Bishop used to depend, I have not been provided with the artillery nor the arms which I needed, though I have many times sent the money for them. However, as nothing exercises a man's ingenuity like necessity, and as I laboured under

[1] The Indian market remained where it had been in Tlatelolco; the Spanish one was on the square before the Viceroy's palace.

The Indians either speedily forgot their arts and handicrafts, or concealed them: unwise laws were enacted which tended also to suppress them.

Archbishop Lorenzana relates an incident illustrating the extraordinary ability of the Indians in executing the most delicate work with primitive tools. A native counterfeiter was arrested and his whole outfit was found to consist of nothing but some thorns from the maguey or cactus plant. The Viceroy was so amazed that he offered the man his life if he would show how he worked, but the Indian preferred to die.

such an extreme one, and, since they did not permit Your Majesty to know, had no hope of help, I strove to take steps toward saving what had been won by such labour and danger (for such a loss would have been a disaster to the service of God, our Lord and that of Your Cæsarian Majesty), and also ourselves from the peril which menaced us. I hastened therefore to find copper in the provinces, offering a good price that it might be the more quickly found; and, as soon as it was brought to me in sufficient quantity, I set a master of artillery, who was fortunately here, at making two medium-sized culverins. These came out so well that, considering their size, they could not have been better. Besides the copper, tin was required for these, as they could not be made without it, and, though with great difficulty and cost, I had procured some from people who had tin plates or other vessels; but neither dear nor cheap could much be found, so I began to enquire whether there was any in the country. Thanks to our Lord, who always provides speedily what is most needed, some small pieces of it were found among the natives of a province, called Tachco,[1] in the form of very thin coins; and continuing my search I discovered that in that province and many others this was used as money; I further learned that it was mined in the province of Tachco, twenty-six leagues from this city so I sent Spaniards with implements there and they brought me a sample of metal. From this time forward I ordered the necessary quantity to be extracted, and shall continue to work these mines, though it will be difficult; while searching for these metals a rich vein of iron was found as I learned from those who say they know it.

Since finding this tin, I have made, and daily continue to make cannon; so far there are five pieces, two medium-

[1] Tasco. Humboldt was struck with this mention of *tin* money and notes "*le passage remarquable dans lequel Cortes parle de l'etain comme monnaie*" (*Essai Politique*).

sized culverins, two a little smaller, and a serpentine cannon; I have two falconets which I brought with me to these parts and a medium-sized culverin which I bought from the sale of the adelantado Juan Ponce de Leon. I shall have in large and small bronzes all those which have arrived on the ships at Vera Cruz, thirty-five pieces and of iron Lombardy guns, culverins of smaller calibre, and other guns and field pieces of smelt iron up to seventy pieces. Thus—our Lord be praised—we are able to defend ourselves; and as far as ammunition is concerned, God provided for that likewise, for we found a sufficient quantity of saltpetre of the best quality and vessels in which to bake it, though there was much waste at first. As for sulphur, I have spoken to Your Majesty of that mountain in the province of Mexico which smokes. A Spaniard[1] descended by means of a rope, seventy or eighty fathoms, and obtained a sufficient quantity to last us in our need; but henceforward there will be no necessity of going to this trouble because it is dangerous and I shall always write to obtain these things from Spain since Your Majesty has been pleased that there should be no longer any Bishop to prevent it.

Manufacture of Ammunition

After establishing peace in Santistevan, which was founded on the river Panuco, and having finished the conquest of Tututepeque, and despatched the captain who went to Impilcingo and to Coliman, all of which I mentioned in one of the past chapters, I went, before going to the city, to visit Vera Cruz and Medellin that I might provide certain necessary things in those ports. I observed that for want of any Spanish settlement near the port of Chalchiqueca other than that of

Transfer of Medellin

[1] Francisco Montaño was the daring soldier who performed this exploit, which Humboldt refuses to believe, notwithstanding the explicit statement of Cortes. That he was let down into the crater, and did bring back the required sulphur can hardly be questioned: perhaps the exact distance he descended was not accurately measured.

Vera Cruz all the ships arriving there unloaded in that town: the port is far from being safe, and many ships are lost there on account of the Northers that frequently blow. I therefore sought a place nearer the port of San Juan suitable for founding a town, but, in spite of our efforts, we found nothing but drifting sandhills, until finally, after some days' search, it pleased our Lord that, two leagues from the port, a good site, with all requisites for establishing a town was found; for there was plenty of wood and water and pasturage, though there was no timber nor stone for building purposes except quite far from there. We found an inlet near this place, and I sent to see if it led to the sea or if barques might come up it to the town. It was found to lead to a river which flowed into the sea; and at the mouth of the river there was more than a fathom of water, so that by cleaning that inlet, which is full of trunks of trees, the barques could ascend to the very houses of the town and unload their cargoes. Seeing the convenience of this site for the safety of the ships, I moved thither the town of Medellin, which was about twenty leagues in the interior of the province of Tatalptetelco; and already most of the house-holders have gone there and built their houses, and steps have been taken to clear that inlet and establish a custom house, for although the ships are delayed in discharging, by means of canoes over a distance of two leagues, they will have safe anchorage. I am certain that this town will be second to the capital in New Spain, for already some ships have unloaded there, and barques and even brigantines bring their merchandise right up to the houses of the town. I will endeavour to arrange so that they may unload without trouble, and the ships will hence-forward be safe in that good port; I have likewise hastened to make roads from that town to this city, so that the merchandise will be more quickly delivered than at present and the distance shortened.

In the past chapters, Most Powerful Lord, I have told Your Excellency to what points I had sent people, both by sea and land, believing that, with God's guidance, Your Majesty would be well served by them; and, as I always take great care and bethink me of all possible means to carry out my desires for the advancement of the royal service of Your Majesty, it seemed to me that it remained only to explore the coast from Panuco to the coast of Florida, which was discovered by Juan Ponce de Leon, and from there to follow the coast of Florida towards the north as far as the Bacallaos.[1] For it is believed absolutely that there is a strait on that coast which leads to the South Sea, and if it should be found according to a certain drawing which I have of that coast, it must lead very near to where the Archipelago was discovered by Magellanes under Your Highness's commands. And should it please God, our Lord, that the said strait be found there, it would open a good and short passage from the spiceries to these dominions of Your Majesty quite two-thirds shorter than that which is at present followed, and which will be free from risks and dangers to the ships; for they would then always go and come through the dominions of Your Majesty having facilities for repairs in any port they choose to enter. I thought over to myself the great service which would be rendered to Your Majesty, though I am quite wasted and exhausted by all I have done, and spent in the expeditions

Search for the Strait

[1] Bacallaos. This is the first known project for finding the northwest passage. *Bacallaos*, or the sea of codfish was so-called from the vast numbers of these fish which have been such an important article of commerce on our North Atlantic coasts. The Spaniards reached Newfoundland, called by them Terra Nuova; and Archbishop Lorenzana mentions in one of his notes that the Marques del Valle (in his time) bore the title of Duke of Terranuova. This is true, but has no reference to the discovery of that land by Cortes's efforts, as the title was created by Philip II., in 1561, and given to Don Carlos de Aragon, second Marques of Terranuova, who married Doña Stefana, a great granddaughter of Cortes.

I have fitted out by land and sea and in providing ammunition and artillery in this city, and in many other expenses and outlays which daily occur; for all our provisions are expensive and of such excessive prices that, although the country is rich, the income I obtain does not correspond to the outlays, costs, and expenses which I have—yet repeating all I have said before, and setting all personal interest aside, I have determined to prepare three caravels and a brigantine, of which the cost will reach more than ten thousand *pesos* of gold which I swear to Your Majesty I shall have to borrow. I add this new service to those I have already rendered, for I hold it to be the most important, hoping as I do to find the strait; and even if this should not be found, certainly many good and rich countries will be discovered, where Your Cæsarian Majesty will be served, and other dominions in considerable number will be brought under Your Imperial Crown. If there be no such strait, then it will be useful that this be known, so that other means may be discovered by which Your Cæsarian Majesty may draw profits from the Spicelands and other countries bordering on them. Thus I hold myself at Your Majesty's service, very happy if you will so command me, and, in the absence of the strait, I hope to conquer these countries at less expense than anyone else; but I pray the Lord, nevertheless, that my armada may attain the object I pursue, which is to discover the strait, for that would be the happiest of all results. Of this I am well convinced, because, to the royal good fortune of Your Majesty, nothing can be denied, and diligence and good preparation and zeal will not be wanting on my part to achieve it.

I likewise expect to send the ships I have built on the South Sea, which vessels—our Lord being willing—will sail down the coast at the end of July of this year 1524 in search of the same strait; for if it exists it cannot

escape both those who go by the South Sea and those who go by the North; for the South Sea Expedition will go till they either find it or reach the country discovered by Magellanes, and those of the North, as I have already said, until they reach the Bacallaos. Thus on one side or the other we cannot fail to discover the secret. I certify to Your Majesty that, judging by my information, I should have obtained greater returns and rendered greater service to Your Majesty by sending these ships to the countries up the coast of the South Sea, but, as I am informed of Your Majesty's desire to discover this strait, and of the greater service your royal crown would thereby receive, I ignore all other profits and interests to follow this other expedition. May our Lord grant it as it best pleases Him, and may Your Majesty's desire be satisfied, and my desire to serve be likewise gratified.

Your Majesty's officials sent to take charge of Your Royal revenues and assets have arrived, and have begun to take the accounts of those who previously had this charge, which I in Your Highness's name had given them. As these officials will submit the statement which has been kept until now to show Your Majesty, I will not speak of it again, in any particular, but refer myself to their report, believing that it will be one from which Your Majesty may perceive the solicitude and vigilance that I have always exercised in everything touching Your Royal service. Although the occupation of the wars and the pacification of this country has been so great, as is manifested by the above, I have nevertheless not forgotten to take special care to collect and secure the greatest possible revenues for Your Majesty.

It will appear by the copy of the accounts which the said officials send to Your Cæsarian Majesty that I have used some sixty-two thousand *pesos* in gold from Your Royal revenues in all the necessary expenses of pacifying these countries and the extension of the dominions Your

Majesty holds in them. It is well that Your Highness should know that I could not do otherwise for I began to spend these monies only after I had nothing left of my own to spend, and when I even owed more than thirty thousand *pesos* of gold which I had borrowed. As there was nothing else to be done, and as I could not otherwise meet the necessary demands of the royal service of Your Highness, I was forced to spend these sums; and I do not believe that the result obtained, and to be obtained, is very small, for it certainly pays a profit of one thousand per cent. Although Your Majesty's officials are satisfied that the amounts have been spent in your service, they will not enter them in the account, for they say they have no power to do this. I beseech Your Majesty to order that it be shown they were properly spent, and admit them in the account, and also to command fifty odd thousand *pesos* of gold which I have spent out of my own fortune or have borrowed from my friends to be repaid me for if this is not returned to me I shall be unable to repay those who loaned me them, and will find myself in great want. I do not think that Your Catholic Majesty will permit this, but rather order that they be paid me, and will grant me many and greater favours in addition, because, Your Highness being so Catholic and so Christian a Prince, my own services are not without merit, to which the fruits they have produced bear testimony.

Fate of the Treasure

I have learned from these officials, and from other persons who came with them, as well as by letters from Spain, that the articles I sent Your Cæsarian Majesty by Antonio de Quiñones and Alonzo de Avila, my procurators in New Spain, did not reach Your Royal presence having been captured by the French [1]

[1] This treasure never reached its destination. Alonzo de Avila and Antonio de Quiñones, the two officers charged to carry the gifts and letters to the Emperor, first stopped at the island of Santa Maria,

because of the little care which the Casa de Contratacion at Seville used for their transport from the Azores. All the objects which were sent were so rich and so strange that I greatly desired Your Majesty might see them, for, besides the profit Your Highness would have from them, my services would have become more apparent; and I was much grieved for their loss. I do rejoice, however, that they were taken, because Your Majesty has but small need of them and I will endeavour to send others much richer and more curious, judging from the information I have about provinces I have now sent to conquer, and others which I will conquer when I have people for the purpose. The French and the other princes to whom those things may become known will also know through them the reason why they are subjected to the Imperial Crown of Your Cæsarian Majesty, as, besides many great kingdoms which Your Highness has in these parts, so far and distant, from these, I, the humblest of Your vassals, come rendering such and so many services. In fulfilment of my offers, I now send by Diego de Soto my servant some trifles, which were formerly left behind as not worthy to accompany the others, and some which I have since then obtained, which, although as I have before said, they were refused as unworthy, bear some resemblance to the others. I likewise send a silver culverin,[1] which in its smelting required two thousand four hundred and fifty pounds, in which I believe there was even some gold,

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one of the Azores, where Quiñones was killed in a brawl; Avila was captured off Cape St. Vincent, by a French corsair, Florin, who, after robbing the ship of the precious freight, allowed it to continue its voyage to Seville, where it arrived on November 7, 1522. Avila was carried by Florin to La Rochelle, but found means to send his despatches to the Emperor. The Aztec spoils went to enrich the treasury of Francis I. of France, who justified their capture by saying he knew of no provision in father Adam's will which made his brother of Spain sole heir to all the earth's treasures.

[1] It weighed about twenty-three hundred-weight; the ornamen-

for it had to be done twice. It was very costly, as, besides the value of the metal, which amounted to twenty-four thousand *pesos* of gold, the mark of silver being at five dollars of gold, the cost of founding, engraving, and carriage to the port, came to more than three thousand *pesos* more. I set myself to make it so rich and so noteworthy and fit to go before such a High and Most Excellent Prince, that I beg of Your Majesty to receive my small gift measuring its value by my devotion and disposition to send greater if I possibly could; for though I am indebted, as I heretofore stated to Your Highness, I willingly went deeper into debt, desiring that Your Majesty might know my zeal, for I have been made so unhappy by the many contradictions I have suffered before Your Highness that I have never heretofore had opportunity to manifest this desire.

I likewise send Your Sacred Majesty sixty thousand *pesos* of gold, belonging to Your Royal revenues as Your Highness will see by the account which the officers and myself send respecting it, and we venture to send this sum together because we imagine that Your Majesty must need it on account of the wars and other things, and also that Your Majesty need not regret the past loss. Hereafter, every time occasion offers, I shall send to Your Majesty the most of what I obtain, and Your Sacred Majesty may believe, as things are being developed, that these kingdoms and dominions of Your Highness will provide surer revenues, with less cost than any of your kingdoms and dominions in Europe; that is, if no other such embarrassments present themselves as have hereto-

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tation executed by the best native silversmiths displayed a phœnix underneath which was the following inscription:

Aquesta nació sin par,
Yo en serviros sin segundo:
Vos sin igual en el mundo.

Cavo says this legend provoked much invidious comment at the Spanish Court.

fore arisen. I say this because, I learned from Gonzalo de Salazar, factor to Your Highness, who arrived two days since, at the port of San Juan in New Spain that he was informed in the island of Cuba, where he stopped, that Diego Velasquez, lieutenant of the admiral there, had had an understanding with Cristobal de Olid, whom I had sent to Hibueras, to revolt against me in his favour. This proceeding seemed so contrary to Your Majesty's service that I am unable to believe it; nevertheless, on the other hand, knowing that the said Diego Velasquez has always sought to work me mischief and to disturb me in every possible way, and even to prevent people from coming to these parts, I do believe it. In that island he imprisons those who go there from here, and oppresses them, taking away their goods, and afterwards bringing judicial proceedings against them so that they, to obtain their freedom and escape him, do and say anything he pleases. I shall inform myself of the truth, and, if I find it to be thus, I think to send to arrest Diego Velasquez and deliver him to Your Majesty; because by cutting the root of these evils—which this man is—all the branches will decay, and I shall be able to make effectual the services I have begun and those which I hope to undertake.

Plans to Convert the Indians

Each time I have written Your Sacred Majesty, I have told Your Highness of the preparation made for the conversion to our holy religion of the Indians of these parts, and I have since besought Your Cæsarian Majesty to provide religious persons of good life and example; but so far very few or almost none have come. It is positive they would obtain great fruit, and I have again to recall it to Your Highness's memory, beseeching you to order some provision in this with all possible haste, because God, our Lord, will be much pleased, and Your Majesty's desire as a Catholic in this matter will be gratified. The procurators Antonio

Quiñones and Alonzo de Avila, counsellors of the towns of New Spain, and myself, begged Your Majesty to send us bishops and other prelates to administer the offices and divine cult, for it then appeared to us that this was necessary, but, examining the matter more fully, it now seems to me Your Sacred Majesty should order other measures to be provided for the more speedy conversion of the natives, and that they may be better instructed in the mysteries of our holy faith. This would be as follows:

Your Majesty should order many religious men to come to these parts, as I have already said, who would be zealous for the conversion of infidels; houses and monasteries would be provided for them in the provinces which we would indicate, and a tithe of one tenth may be levied for their support; the surplus would be assigned for the churches and their furnishings in the towns where Spaniards live, and to their clergy. The tithes would be collected by Your Majesty's officials who would keep account of them and provide all such monasteries and churches with necessaries; the amount will be enough and more than enough so that Your Majesty may receive the surplus. Let Your Highness beseech His Holiness to concede Your Majesty the tithes in these parts for this purpose, making him understand the service rendered to God, our Lord; and this can only be obtained in this way, because, if we have the bishops and other prelates, they will follow the customs, which as a punishment for our sins exist to-day, of disposing of the gifts of the Church and wasting them in pomps and other vices, leaving family estates for their children.[1]

[1] Archbishop Lorenzana agrees with other authorities that there were bishops and canons in Spain who led far from exemplary lives, but says this state of things was fortunately brought to a close by the disciplinary enactments of the Council of Trent. Cortes also objected to doctors, and more especially to lawyers; he earnestly begged the Emperor to forbid members of these learned professions to come to Mexico, saying that the doctors would only bring new diseases

A still worse evil might happen, for the natives of these parts had, in their times, those who conducted their rites and ceremonies who were so strict not only in composure and honesty, but also in chastity, that if one was discovered violating his vows he was punished with death; if they now saw the servants of God's Church in the power of Mammon, practising vanities, and learned that they were ministers of God, and beheld them falling into vice, as is the case in our times in Spain, it would bring our Faith into contempt and the natives would hold it as a mockery; and this would do such mischief that I do not believe any amount of preaching would be of any avail. As this is of such importance, and the principal object of Your Majesty is, and should be, the conversion of these people, those who reside here in Your Royal name should behave as becomes Christians. I have wished to give this information and my opinion which I pray Your Highness to accept as coming from your subject and vassal, who has worked with all his vital powers, and will ever strive to extend Your Majesty's kingdoms and dominions in these parts and to publish Your Royal fame and great power among these people: and who likewise desires and will strive that Your Highness may sow amongst them our Holy Faith meriting thereby the eternal reward to everlasting life. As the giving of holy orders, the consecration of churches, ornaments, oils and chrism, and other functions require a bishop, and, we not having any, it would be difficult to seek them elsewhere, Your Majesty should likewise beseech His Holiness to grant such powers to two principal persons amongst the religious men coming here, who might be as special delegates, one from the Order of

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with them, while failing to cure the old ones, and the lawyers would flourish by augmenting the contentions and dissensions, which, though already too frequent, the colonists managed to settle amicably amongst themselves.

St. Francis, and the other from the Order of St. Dominic. They should bring the most extensive powers Your Majesty can obtain, because these countries are so distant from the Roman Church, and the Christians who actually live here and will hereafter reside here are so far from religious discipline and, as human beings, subject to sin, that His Holiness should grant to these religious men very ample powers to be handed down by persons who always reside here, be it either to one General or to a Provincial of each Order in this country.[1]

The tithes farmed in these countries have been farmed in some of the towns, and in others they are offered by public crier; they have been farmed since the year 1523 until now, for before then it did not seem to me that they should be levied, as they were insignificant in themselves, and because at that time those who had land spent more in keeping themselves during the war than their profits amounted to. Whatever else Your Majesty may command for your services will be done.

The tithes of this city for the year 1523 and 1524 were adjudged to the highest bidder for five thousand five hundred and fifty *pesos* of gold, and those of the towns of Medellin and Vera Cruz are estimated at one thousand *pesos* of gold. For the present year they are not yet adjudged, and I believe they will go still higher; I do not know how much the other towns brought, as they are distant and I have as yet no information. This money will be used to build churches, pay priests and sacristans, providing the ornaments and other necessary things for their upkeep. The different accounts will be submitted to the treasurer and the accountant of Your

[1] Charles V. acted on this suggestion, and the Pope, at his instance, gave to Padre Toribio de Benevente (*Motolinia*) power to give confirmation, but not to consecrate holy oils. The first superior of Franciscans was Friar Martin de Valencia, and of the Dominicans, Friar Vetanzos, who built the first convent near Texcoco, at a place called Tepetlaxtoc (Lorenzana, *Relacion Quarta*, note).

Majesty, for everything will be paid to the treasurer and nothing expended without an order from the accountant or myself.

I have likewise, most Catholic Lord, been informed by ships from the island that Your Majesty's judges and officials living in the island of Hispaniola have ordered a prohibition to be published by the public crier against exporting, under pain of death, any mares or other breeding animals to New Spain; and they have done this with the intention of forcing us always to buy beasts and cattle from them which they sell at excessive prices. This they should not do, and the mischief done to Your Majesty is notorious, for the peopling and pacification of this country are retarded; they know our need of horses, and have forbidden their exportation out of excessive love of gain, for it is clear that no need of their port has provoked this measure. I beg Your Majesty that it be revoked, by sending an injunction under Your Royal hand that everyone may export mares without being exposed to any penalty, for, besides that they would not miss the horses, Your Majesty has the greatest interest that we should have all we require, as we cannot otherwise continue our conquest, nor preserve what we have already conquered; moreover, I would pay very liberally for these mares. In any case, I could revenge myself in such a manner that they would gladly revoke their mandates and edicts, for, by retaliating and prohibiting all products of these islands from entering this country, save only what they had forbidden, they would gladly allow the one in order to be allowed the other.[1] Their only resource is in trading with this country, and, heretofore, a thousand *pesos* of gold could not be found amongst all the householders of the island, while now they have more than they ever had at any time. Rather than give occasion to evil speakers and maligners, I have dissembled until I could

Trade Relations

[1] Pan-American reciprocity in embryo.

make it known to Your Majesty, so that Your Highness might order whatever seems required for Your Royal service.

I have also explained to Your Cæsarian Majesty the need for plants of all kinds; for every species of agriculture may flourish here; but nothing has been so far provided, and I again pray Your Majesty to order a provision from the Casa de la Contratacion at Seville, so that no ship be allowed to sail without bringing a certain number of plants which would favour the population and prosperity of the country.

I seek by every possible means to increase the population of these countries, that the Spanish settlers and natives of them should preserve themselves and propogate, and that our Holy Faith be built up in every respect. As Your Majesty has done me the favour to charge me with its government, and God, our Lord, has pleased to make me the medium of bringing it under the imperial yoke of Your Highness, therefore I order certain ordinances to be published, of which I send a copy to Your Majesty, and hence need not explain, except to say that in my judgment, it is necessary that these ordinances should be obeyed.[1] The Spaniards here are

[1] Some of the enactments of Cortes were as strict as any Puritan could prescribe. Married colonists were obliged to bring their wives to their plantations within eighteen months, under pain of forfeiting their grant: those who were unmarried were given the same period within which to find wives (Gomara, *Hist. Mex. Ordenanzas Municipales apud Pacheco and Cardeñas*).

Sumptuary laws regulated the wearing of velvets, silks, and brocades, or their use for saddles, shoes, and sword-belts, as well as jewels, gold ornaments, and embroideries (Herrera, *Hist. General*, Dec., III lib. 5; Puya, *Cedulario*).

Sunday observance was very rigid, and all shops were closed; trades of every kind were suspended during the hours of religious services, while attendance at mass was compulsory on Sundays and great feast days (*Pacheco and Cardeñas*). The incident of Cortes submitting to a public whipping for failing to attend, is related in the Biographical Note.

not satisfied with some of them, especially those which require them to settle in the country, for all, or most of them, expected to conduct themselves here as they have done in the islands; where their conduct consisted in consuming the country's substance, destroying, and afterwards abandoning it. But, as it seems to me, we who have had experience in the past, would be blamable, did we not provide a remedy for the present and the future, correcting notorious abuses which caused ills on the said islands; especially as this country being, as I have already many times written to Your Majesty, of such size and wealth, where our Lord may be well served, and the royal revenues of Your Majesty increased. I, therefore, beseech Your Majesty to have the ordinances examined, and to send me an order respecting what Your Highness may approve, directing me what to do, not only concerning the compliance with the said ordinances, but also in how far Your Majesty desires their execution. I shall always be careful to add whatever circumstances may seem to me to require, for the country is so large, the climate so diverse, and there are so many new discoveries, that it is necessary to modify plans and counsels according to new events, so that if in anything I had said, or shall hereafter say to Your Majesty, there seems to be something contradictory to what I had said before, Your Excellency may believe that the new case obliges me to give a new opinion.

Most invincible Cæsar, may God, our Lord, guide,

Gambling was the hardest vice to control, and Cortes's enemies were not slow to pick upon his own fondness for cards and dice, alleging that he privately practised and encouraged what he publicly condemned.

Unfortunately the Spaniards introduced the most reprehensible of all "sports,"—if indeed such it can be honestly called,—the bull-fight as early as 1526 (Vetancourt, *Teatro Mexicano*).

Dancing was not discouraged, and religious festivals were celebrated with gorgeous processions, so life was not quite so colourless as it was afterwards made in the New England colonies.

prosper, and preserve the person of Your Majesty, and grant extension of greater kingdoms and lordships for very lengthy times in His Holy Service, and everything else which Your Highness may desire.

From the great City of Temixtitan in this New Spain on 15 October, 1524.

Your Sacred Majesty's very humble subject and loyal vassal who kisses the Royal feet of Your Majesty.

FERDINAND CORTES.

APPENDIX TO FOURTH LETTER

APPENDIX TO FOURTH LETTER

ENCOMIENDA SYSTEM

THE system of *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* of the Indians was begun in the Islands in the time of Columbus, and was, at the outset, sanctioned by the Catholic Sovereigns, though the first authorisation, given in 1497, grants *repartimientos* of lands but says nothing about Indians. It was represented to be the best means for civilising and Christianising the natives; but this sanction was afterwards revoked by Isabella the Catholic, who, with a fuller knowledge of the real conditions and of the abuses which quickly sprang up, issued severe edicts against them.

The *repartimiento*, according to Leon, signified the first partition or allotment of Indians made to the colonists, and the *encomienda* was the second grant, made after the death of the first holder of the right. The *repartimiento* in the Islands was sometimes of only a week's duration, and hence had a temporary character, whereas the *encomienda* was a permanent concession of rights over certain Indians which was as much a property right as a grant of land and became hereditary in the family holding it.

The home government enacted many measures for regulating the system, and for the protection of the Indians, but distance and other circumstances made it easy to evade these provisions, and shocking abuses and cruelties, which rapidly depopulated the islands, became common. It was this deplorable state of things which first aroused the indignation of the Dominican monk, Las Casas, afterwards Bishop of Chiapa and started him upon the zealous crusade in favour of the rights of the natives; which procured him the glorious title of "Protector-General of the Indians."

The defenders of this system of enforced serfdom argued that the Indians were by nature lazy, and, if left free, would never work; that the only hope of converting them to Christianity was to keep them in touch with Christians; and also that the climate was such, that white labour could not be employed, even if there were plenty of workmen, which there were not. It was therefore urged that without compulsion there would be no native labour and without native labour there would be no revenue.

Practically the only reward given to the soldiers of Cortes after the conquest of Mexico was to assign to each one a *repartimiento* or

encomienda of Indians, with whom to work the lands granted them. Cortes seems to have been sincerely opposed to the system from the outset, and to have yielded to the general clamour, only after having presented other projects which were refused; nor does he seem to have ever reconciled his conscience to it, although, once his sanction had been given, he defended it on the usual grounds of its expediency, even going so far as to withhold the publication of a royal decree which the friars had obtained from the Emperor, revoking all *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* already conceded, and forbidding new ones under severest penalties in the future. He defended this action by writing to the Emperor that to execute the decree would be to throw the Indians back into barbarism, ruin the colony, and drive the colonists out of the country.

The bishops and friars in Mexico energetically repudiated this idea, and in writing to the Emperor, in 1528, during the governorship of Nuño de Guzman, who was striving to obtain the royal approval of *encomiendas*, the Franciscans of Mexico expressed themselves as follows: "The proposal of the Governor and his auditors, suggested to them by the holders of *encomiendas* in New Spain, that the natives should be so held for their own welfare, their conversion to the faith, and their obedience to the King, is nothing else but the using of religion as a pretext to enable them to continue their tyranny as heretofore. When have these impious men ever had a thought of converting these people? or of treating them humanely? We have been witnesses of the methods of these holders of *encomiendas* for the last five years, and we have seen that their vexatious torments seem to have for their object the destruction of the Indians, and from these we may infer how much more cruel they were in the other three years after the conquest. By a special providence of God they have not succeeded, even with all the means they have used, in destroying the Mexicans. To wish to make slaves of the natives of the New World in order to subject them to the Faith and the King's obedience, is undoubtedly iniquitous, and God has forbidden men all abominations, even though the greatest good should result from them. Sacrifice is never acceptable if offered with unclean hands. It were a lesser evil if not a single inhabitant of the New World were ever converted to our Holy Faith, and that the King's sovereignty should be lost forever, than that these people should be brought to the one or the other by slavery" (Fr. Andres Calvo, *Apud Bustamante*).

The Empress, when she was regent, was moved to tears by one such relation as this; royal decrees without number were repeatedly issued, not merely to correct the abuses, but to suppress the system itself; but by intrigue and every sort of subterfuge, rapacious conquerors and greedy colonists would wrench concessions from the unwilling sovereigns which, as soon as the real state of things became known, would be promptly revoked. Open violation of the law was common, and winked at by the local authorities, only the bishops and friars

being left to protect against such doings. They were the abolitionists of those times, and they had recourse to the severest spiritual penalties, refusing the sacraments, and launching excommunications on the notoriously cruel among the slave-holding colonists. Yielding to the arguments so persistently advanced, temporising measures were adopted; the system being provisionally tolerated while every possible provision for mitigating its evils was prescribed. Some of these were as follows: the holder of an *encomienda* was bound to pledge himself to an eight years' residence on his estate; no women or boys under twelve years were to do plantation work; Indian labourers could not be let out to others, nor be employed for regulating waterways, excavating canals, nor for building any house other than that of the holder of the *encomienda*; they were not to be taken away from their native province, and squads of labourers could be summoned for a period of twenty days at a time only, at the ratio of ten men out of every hundred in a village, and this not at their own harvest time; since mules, horses, and oxen had been imported, the Indians were not to be used as beasts of burden, as they were in the beginning; the villages were to be within a given distance of the plantations; the hours of work were from sunrise until one hour before sunset, with a rest at midday, and the proprietor must feed them well, pay them at least one *castellano* per year, clothe them, and provide for the education of the sons of chiefs in the friar's school; moreover a priest was to be in charge of every two thousand Indians. Had these, and the many other safeguards provided, been strictly observed by the Spaniards, the state of the Indians would not have been a particularly bad one.

The Indians thus divided in *encomiendas* were not, strictly speaking, slaves, though their labour was enforced. The slaves were a class apart, and consisted of those who had been held in slavery by the Mexicans before the arrival of Cortes, and of such as had afterwards been condemned to slavery for rebellion.

Mention is several times made in the Letters of whole villages being sold or divided as a punishment for insurrection. How easy it was for the unscrupulous to provoke quarrels and broils, readily magnified into "rebellions," or to trump up a charge on which natives might be enslaved, may be imagined. All such were branded, and as *encomienda* Indians could not be sent to the mines or to work at a distance; the slaves were used for these hard purposes. They were procured in immense numbers from Mexican chiefs either by purchase—sometimes for nominal sums—and sometimes in payment of debts, or to discharge obligations, and this opened the way to countless abuses, as the *caciques* not infrequently delivered free men into Spanish slavery, and, once branded, their status was fixed forever. The trade in human flesh flourished, and thousands were shipped to the islands where the natives were rapidly being exterminated, and the treatment of these poor creatures was so inhuman that many died during the voyage, and others in despair threw themselves overboard and were drowned.

It is a question, however, whether this treatment was worse than they had suffered from their Mexican owners. Cortes affirms that it was not, and that the threat they most feared was to be sold back to the Aztecs. On the other hand, Motolinia describes the Spanish system as the "sixth plague." I have elsewhere read that the Aztec system was a purely patriarchal one, and that such slaves as were not destined for human sacrifices had everything but their freedom; it being also against the law to sell them, while their children were all born free, and they could hold property of their own. It may indeed be that the Aztec law provided such humane protections, but then we have seen that the Spanish laws were also numerous and beneficient, so that the actual fate of the slave cannot be gauged by the spirit of the laws, but by the observance of them.

The Tlascalans were exempt from the prevailing system, in recognition of their services during the conquest, and, in 1537, they themselves suppressed slavery and serfage of every sort within their province, a measure which was approved by the Viceroy.

The system of *encomiendas* was finally abolished in Mexico under Charles III.

FIFTH LETTER

FIFTH LETTER

Sacred Catholic Cæsarian Majesty:

On the 23 October of the past year, 1525, I despatched a ship to the Island Española, from the town of Trujillo, which is a port on the Cape of Honduras,[1] on board which was a servant of mine whom I ordered to cross over to Spain. I wrote to Your Majesty something of what had happened, at the gulf called Hibueras, between the two captains[2] I had sent there, and another captain called Gil Gonzalez who went there afterwards. As I was unable, when the vessel and messenger departed, to give Your Majesty any account of my journey and adventures, from the time I left this great city of Temixtitan, until I met with the people in those distant parts, it seemed to me important that Your Highness should be informed of my doings, if only for the sake of not departing from my custom, which is to withhold nothing, wherein I am concerned, from the knowledge of Your Majesty. I shall, therefore, relate events as best I can; for to describe them as they occurred is more than I could undertake to do, and, moreover, my narrative might perhaps be incomprehensible to those for whom it is

[1] First discovered by Columbus in 1502, and named by him Cape Caximos, after some fruit trees, called thus by the natives; the name of the gulf is spelled in different ways; *Hibueras*, which is perhaps the most usual, means "pumpkins" in the provincial dialect, and these are plentiful there about. The name *Honduras* meaning difficulties is Spanish.

[2] Cristobal de Olid and Francisco de Las Casas; as explained in the Fourth Letter.

destined. I will relate the principal and most important occurrences of the said journey, omitting a great many as accessory, though each would furnish material for ample writing.

Cortes Leaves Mexico

Having given my orders respecting that affair of Cristobal de Olid, as I related to Your Majesty, it seemed to me I had been a long time inactive, and without undertaking anything in Your Majesty's service; and, although my arm was not yet healed of its wound, I nevertheless determined to undertake something. I left this great city of Temixtitan on the 12 October of 1524 last, accompanied by some horsemen and foot soldiers, chosen among my old retainers and servants, and by some friends and relatives of mine, amongst whom were Gonzalo de Salazar, and Peralmindez Chirino,[1] the former a factor, and the latter an inspector, for Your Majesty; and I also took with me some noble persons of the natives, and I left the administration of justice and government to the

[1] Gonzalo de Salazar, Pero Armildez Chirino, Alonso de Estrada, and Rodrigo de Albornoz, were sent as revenue officers to Mexico in 1524, and to establish a court of accounts. Estrada was treasurer, Albornoz was accountant, Salazar factor, and Chirino inspector. Their expectations of finding immense treasures ready at hand were disappointed, and the only explanation which seemed to them adequate was that Cortes had concealed or made way with them. In their joint despatch to the Emperor, they accused him of possessing great riches, and of having hidden the treasure of Montezuma instead of accounting for it to the crown. They described Cortes as tyrannical, disloyal, and engaged in plotting to establish his authority independently in the country. This despatch was closely followed by two other letters, one signed by all of them, and the other by Salazar alone. Salazar stated that Cortes had collected three hundred and four million *castellanos*, without counting Montezuma's treasure, which was buried in various secret places; that he had retained for himself some thirty-seven to forty provinces, some of them as large as all Andalusia; that he was commonly believed to have poisoned Francisco de Garay; and that the ships he pretended were preparing for the expedition to the Spice Islands were really for carrying his treasure and himself in safety to France.

treasurer and accountant of Your Highness, and to the licenciate Alonzo de Zuarzo. I provided this city with sufficient artillery, ammunition, and a garrison, and also placed artillery at the dockyard, ordering the brigantines to be made ready, and a military governor to have charge of any operations necessary for the defence of the city. All this being settled I left this city of Temixtitan with the said design, and, while engaged at Espiritu Santo, which is a town in the province of Coazacoalco, one hundred and ten leagues from this city, in settling the internal affairs of the community, I sent messengers to Tabasco and Xicalango to inform the chiefs of these provinces of my intended journey, ordering them to meet me or to send persons to whom I might give my instructions, adding that their deputies should be honourable men of good understanding, who would repeat faithfully to them the sense of my instructions. They did exactly as I directed, and received my messengers with due honour, sending me seven or eight responsible men with full authority, as is their habit on such occasions.

After enquiring of them respecting things I wished to know about the country, they told me that on the sea-coast, beyond the country called Yucatan, towards the Bay of Asumption,[1] there were some Spaniards who molested them; for, besides burning their villages and slaying their people, in consequence of which many had fled to the forests, they had totally destroyed the trade which formerly flourished on that coast. Some who had been in those parts described to me most of the villages on the coast as far as the residence of Pedrarias de Avila,[2] Your

[1] A misspelling for *Ascencion*, though Gonzalo de Avila's people were not there but some sixty leagues down the coast.

[2] Pedrarius de Avila was from Segovia, and had distinguished himself in the Moorish wars, both in Spain and Africa; he was sent, in 1513, to supersede Balboa as Governor of the colony on the Isthmus of Darien, and sailed in command of one of the best expeditions sent by King Ferdinand to the New World, consisting of fifteen ships

Majesty's Governor in those parts, and they made me a drawing on cloth of the whole of it by which I calculated that I could go over the greater part of it, especially as far as the place they indicated to me as the abode of those Spaniards. Thus informed about the road I was to take for carrying out my plans, and converting the natives to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith, and bringing them to Your Majesty's service (certain as I was that on such a long journey I would have to cross many provinces and encounter people of divers races), being also curious to know whether the Spaniards they described were those whom I had sent under the Captains Cristobal de Olid, Pedro de Alvarado, or Francisco de las Casas, I esteemed it advantageous to Your Majesty's service to go thither myself; inasmuch as my journey being through regions and provinces heretofore unexplored, I would have ample occasion for serving Your Majesty, and pacifying the said countries, as afterwards happened. Conceiving to myself the result my expedition would produce, and setting aside the fatigues and expenses it entailed, of which some of my people did not fail to remind me, I determined to follow the route already decided upon before leaving this city.

Before I reached the said town of Espiritu Santo, I had received letters from this city at two or three places on the road, from my lieutenants, and other persons; and Your Majesty's officials who were with me likewise received similar ones. These informed us that the Treasurer and Accounting Master had quarrelled, and

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carrying twelve hundred soldiers, besides fifteen hundred gentlemen, or persons of some quality. Balboa, without a murmur, surrendered to the new Governor his authority at Santa Maria Antigua, as the town on Darien was called, and shortly afterward married his daughter; but, in spite of this, Pedrarius trumped up a charge of disloyalty and plotting a rebellion against Balboa, who, to the sorrow and amazement of the protesting colonists was executed. The Bishop of Burgos protected Pedrarius from the punishment his conduct merited.


Map of
YUCATAN
and the
ADJACENT TERRITORIES
of the
Itzaex or Maya Indians, the Tipuans, Quecheachés, Mopanés, Lacandones, Cholés &c,
with the district of VERA PAZ;
as they were known to the Spaniards from the first discovery of the Peninsula in 1506, to the close of the Seventeenth Century,
showing also
the probable route of Cortes on his march from Mexico to Honduras.
Compiled from the earliest and corrected by the latest authorities
By Dudley Costello Esqre
1854
GULF OF MEXICO
CARIBBEAN SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
HIBUERAS OR HONDURAS
MOSQUITO TERRITY called CARIAY
I. Fernandina or CUBA
C. S. Antonio
I. de Pinos
C. Gracias a Dios
PROVINCE OF CHOACA
Country of the COCAMES
Country of the KUPULES
Country of the TIPUANS and QUECHEACHES
Country of the ACALANS
Country of the QUICHES and TIRUMPICS
Proposed Settlement of EL PROSPERO
ITZAEX or MAYAS
Country of the ITZAEX or MAYA INDIANS
Country of the PUCHUTLAS
Country of the MOPANES
Country of the CHOLES
LACANDON Country
Country of the MANCHES
VERA PAZ or Tierra de Guerra
TUTZULUTLAN
Bay of Ascension
Grijalva May 13. 1519
Grijalva May 5. 1518
I. Cozumel or Santa Cruz
Cortes Feb. 1519
Montejo 1527
Cordova 1517
Grijalva 1518
Cortes 1519
Bay of Terminos or Xicalango
Guazacualco
Cortes Nov. 1524
Route of Cortes
Cortes 1525
Cortes April 1525
De Solis and Pinzon 1506
Guanajos or Bonacca
Columbus July 30. 1502
Ruatan
C. Honduras or Punta de Cáxinas
Truxillo
G. of Dulce
L. Atitlan
Santiago de Guatemala
Merida
Valladolid
Campeachy
Champoton
Tabasco
Tayasal or Los Remedios
L. of Lacandon
L. Bacalar
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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that there no longer existed between them the harmony necessary for the proper discharge of their respective functions with which I, in Your Majesty's name, had charged them. I took what seemed to me the required measures, which was to write them urgent reproofs for their conduct, even warning them that if they could not agree with one another and adopt different methods, I would provide a remedy which would please neither of them, and report the whole matter to Your Majesty. During my stay in the said town of Espiritu Santo, and while engaged in preparations for my journey, fresh letters came from the lieutenants and from other persons, reporting that their enmities still continued and were even increased; so much so that during one council meeting they had actually drawn their swords, thus causing a great scandal and commotion, not only amongst the Spaniards who armed themselves and took one side or the other, but even among the natives of the city who took up arms saying that the commotion justified them. Seeing therefore that my reproofs and warnings were not sufficient, and that I could not go myself to remedy the matter without abandoning my expedition, it seemed to me sufficient to send the factor and inspector who were with me, with equal powers to inquire into the cause of the dispute and pacify things; and I even gave them another secret power of attorney, enabling them to suspend both men from the charge which I had left them, if reasonable means did not suffice, and to assume the government themselves, together with the licenciate Alonzo de Zuazo, and to punish the offenders. I was quite convinced that the errand of the said factor and inspector would produce good results, and that they would succeed in pacifying the rival passions, so I went on my way with my mind at ease.

This being done I made a review of my forces which were to accompany me, and found that there were

ninety-three horsemen, besides crossbowmen and arquebusiers, and thirty odd foot soldiers; altogether a total of two hundred and thirty men. I took a large caravel which had been sent to me from the town of Medellin, loaded with provisions, and was then at anchor in the port of Espiritu Santo. I again loaded this vessel with the stores I had brought; and, putting four pieces of artillery on board, as well as crossbows, muskets, and other ammunition, I ordered the crew to sail to the island of Tabasco, and wait there for my commands.

Number of his Force

I likewise wrote to a servant of mine who lives at Medellin to provision two other caravels and a large boat then in the port, and to send them to me: I gave instructions to Rodrigo de Paz whom I left in care of my house and property in Temixtitan to send five or six thousand ounces of gold to Medellin to pay for the said provisions, and I likewise wrote to the treasurer asking him to advance me that money as I had no more in the hands of the aforesaid agent. All this being done according to my wishes, the caravel came as far as the River Tabasco, laden with provisions which proved, however, to be of little use, as, my road being far inland, the heavily laden caravel could neither go up the river, nor could I send for them on account of the extensive swamps that lay between. Having arranged for what was to go by sea, I set out and marched along the coast until I reached a province, called Çupilco,[1] some thirty-five leagues distant from Espiritu Santo; besides several large swamps and streams, over all of which temporary bridges were built, I had to cross, on this journey, three very large rivers, one near a village, called Tumalo, some nine leagues from the town of Espiritu Santo, the other at Agualulco, nine leagues further on; these were

[1] Most probably Tupilcos is meant: no map shows these various names as Cortes spells them.

crossed in canoes, the horses swimming, being led by halters; and the last river was so wide that nothing could make the horses swim it, so I had to provide a wooden bridge about half a league up from the sea where the horses and people could pass. It was nine hundred and thirty paces long and was indeed a marvellous thing to behold. This Province of Çupilco abounds in the fruit called cacao and has also many fisheries; there are ten or twelve good towns, I mean chief towns besides hamlets, and the country is flat with many marshes so that in winter it is impossible to go about except in canoes. Although I traversed it in the dry season from one end to the other, which is about twenty leagues, more than fifty bridges had to be built for the passage of men and horses. The natives are quiet and peaceable, though rather timid and shy owing to the little intercourse they had had with Spaniards, but, through my arrival, they became more confident and served very willingly, not only myself and my companions, but also the Spaniards to whom they were allotted on any departure.

From this province of Çupilco, according to the drawing the natives of Tabasco and Xicalango had given me, I was to proceed to another, called Cagoatan; but, as the natives travelled only by water, they were ignorant of any overland route, though they pointed out to me where the said province was supposed to be. I was obliged, therefore, to send some Spaniards and Indians in that direction to look for the road, and, upon discovering it, to make it possible for the rest of us to advance; for it was through very great forests. It pleased our Lord that, after some difficulty, it should be found, for, besides the forests, there were many troublesome marshes over all, or most, of which bridges had to be built, and we had to cross the great river, called Quecalapa, a tributary of the Tabasco. From there, I sent two Spaniards to the chiefs of Tabasco and Conapa, asking them to send

me some fifteen or twenty canoes to bring provisions up that river from the caravels lying there, and to help me to cross the river and to transport the provisions to the chief town of Zaguatan, which, it afterwards appeared, was some twelve leagues up the river from where I crossed; and they did all this, complying exactly with my request.

After discovering the road to the River Zalapa,[1] which, as I said, we had to cross, I left the last village of the province of Çupilco, called Anaxuxuan, and slept that first night on the open ground between some lagoons; and early the next day we reached the river but found no canoes in which to cross because those I had sent to ask from the chief of Tabasco had not arrived. I learnt, moreover, that the scouts who went ahead were opening the road up the river from the other side, because, having been told that it flowed through the principal town of the said province, they naturally followed its course so as not to go astray. One of them had gone in a canoe by water to reach the town the sooner, and on his arrival had found all the people in a commotion, so he spoke to them through an interpreter he had with him; and, after succeeding in calming them somewhat, he sent some Indians in his canoe down the river to tell me what had happened with the natives of that town, and that he was coming down himself, opening the road by which I was to march until he should meet the scouts who were working up on this other side. This news gave me great pleasure, not merely because it made known the peaceful disposition of the natives, but also because it assured to me a road which I had thought was doubtful, or at least very difficult. On the canoe brought by these Indians, and some rafts which I had built out of logs, I managed to send all the heavy baggage to the other side of the river, which at that point is very wide. While

[1] Also sometimes given as Quezolape, and Guezalapa.

occupied in crossing, those Spaniards whom I had sent to Tabasco arrived with twenty canoes loaded with supplies from the large caravel which I had sent there from Coazacoalco; and I learned from them that the two other large caravels and the ship had not yet arrived in the river, having remained behind at Coazacoalco, but that they were expected soon. No less than two hundred Indians from Tabasco and Cunapa came in the said canoes, and I crossed the river without other accident than the drowning of a negro slave and the loss of two loads of iron tools of which we afterwards stood in some need.

That night, I, with all my people, slept on the other side of the river, and the next day set out to follow the track of the scouts who were opening the road, having no other guide but the river bank itself. We marched thus about six leagues, and arrived under a pouring rain in a forest, where we slept. During the night, the Spaniard who had gone up the river to the town of Çagoatan came back with some seventy Indians, natives of that place, and told me that he had opened the road on the other side, but that if I wished to take it I would have to retrace my steps for a distance of two leagues. I did this, but gave orders at the same time that the scouts, who were in advance cutting their way along the bank of the river, and who had already gone three leagues from the place where I myself had passed the night, should continue their work: they had scarcely advanced a league and a half when they reached the outskirts of the town, and, in this way, two roads were open where before there had been none.

I took the road opened by the natives, and, although it proved a hard one, on account of the torrents of rain which had fallen that day and of the many swamps we had to cross, I still managed to arrive on the same day at one of the suburbs of the said town, which, though

the smallest of all, contained more than two hundred sufficiently good houses; we could not reach the other because it was separated from us by rivers which flowed between and which we could have crossed only by swimming.

The towns were all very deserted, and we found, upon our arrival, that all the Indians who had accompanied the Spaniards had also fled, notwithstanding that I had spoken to them kindly and treated them well, distributing among them some of the trifles I had with me, and thanking them for the pains they had taken in opening the said road. I had told them that my coming to these parts was by Your Majesty's commands and for no other purpose than to teach them to believe in and worship only one God, Creator and Maker of all things, and to acknowledge Your Majesty as supreme lord of the country, and many other like things, which I usually said to them. I waited three or four days, thinking they had left from fear and would come back to speak to me, but none of them ever appeared.

In order to bring them by peaceable means to Your Majesty's service, and to obtain information from them about my road, for there seemed not to be even a track of a single person ever having gone on land, all travelling on the great rivers and lakes, I determined to send two companies of Spaniards and some natives of Temixtitan, whom I had with me, to search for the people of the province and bring some of them to me. By means of the canoes which had come up the river from Tabasco, and of others we procured at the said town, my men managed to navigate most of the rivers and swamps, as marching overland seemed impracticable; but they discovered only two Indians and some women from whom I took every pains to ascertain where their chief and his people were. They told me no more, however, than that they were wandering dispersed through the forest,

swamps, and rivers. I likewise asked them about the road to the province of Chilapan, which, according to the drawing I had, was the next on my road; but they would never tell me, saying that their only mode of travel was by rivers and swamps in their canoes, and that they only knew how to go thither by water and never by land. They did, however, point out to me a chain of mountains, some ten leagues distant perhaps, saying that in its neighbourhood stood the principal town of Chilapanon on the banks of a large river which, joining with the Çagoatan lower down, flowed afterwards into the Tabasco; and that further up the river there was another town, called Acumba[1]; but neither did they know any road thither by land.

Character of the Country

I remained in this town twenty days, during which I never ceased to seek a road leading to somewhere, but I never found one, either great or small; on the contrary, the country about us had so many swamps and lagoons that it seemed impossible to cross them, but, as we were already in such straits from want of provisions, we commended our souls to God, our Creator, and built over the marsh a bridge three hundred paces in length, which was constructed of many large beams, between thirty-five and forty feet in length, on which cross beams were laid, and on these we passed over, marching through the country in quest of the place where we had been told was the town of Chilapan. Meanwhile, I sent a company of horsemen, with crossbowmen, by another way to search for the town of Acumba, and they found it that same day. By swimming and by means of two canoes which they found there, they surprised the villages whose inhabitants fled so they were unable to capture any except

[1] Also written Athumba, but, according to Gayangos, Ocumba appears very distinctly in the Vienna MS.: he adds that some writers identify the place as *Cicimbra*.

two men and some women with whom they came to meet me on the road; they also found plenty of provisions. That night, I slept on the open ground.

Next day, it pleased God that we should come to a dryer country with fewer marshes, and those Indians who had been taken at Acumba guided us as far as Chilapan, where we arrived late the next day, finding all the town burned and the natives absent. This town of Chilapan is beautifully situated and very large. It is surrounded by plantations of fruit trees of the country and fields of maize, which, though not yet ripe, were of great comfort to us in our necessity. I remained there two days, laying in supplies for the journey, and sending out some expeditions into the neighbourhood to capture, if possible, some natives from whom I might learn about the road; but with the exception of two at first, who were found concealed in the village, all our searching was in vain. I got information from these, however, about the road to Tepetitan,[1] otherwise called Tamacastepeque; although they hardly knew their way thither, we were fortunate enough, sometimes by their guidance, and sometimes by half feeling our way, to reach that town within two days.

On the road, we had to cross a large river, called Chilapan, from which the town took its name, and this was accomplished with great difficulty owing to the deep and rapid stream; we used rafts as there were no canoes there and we lost a negro who was drowned, and much of the baggage of the Spaniards. After this river, which we crossed at a place a league and a half distant from the said village of Chilapan, we had to cross several large swamps before reaching Tepetitan, in all of which but one the horses sank to their knees and many times to their ears. Between Chilapan and Tepetitan, a distance of six or seven leagues, the country was full of similar

[1] Tepetizan.

swamps; one especially we found so perilous that, though a bridge was built over it two or three Spaniards were very nearly drowned. After two days of such fatigues, we reached the said village of Tepetitan, which we also found burned and deserted, thus causing us double hardship. We found some fruits of the country inside and some fields of maize in the neighbourhood, unripe, though it was taller than that at Chilapan; we also discovered under the burnt houses, some granaries which contained small quantities of maize; this was of great help in the extreme necessity to which we were reduced. At this village of Tepetitan, which stands at the foot of a mountain chain, I remained six full days, causing excursions to be made in search of natives who might be induced to return peaceably to their dwellings and point out to us the road ahead; but we never could catch but a single man and some women from whom I learned that the chief and natives of the town had been induced by the people of Çagoatan to burn their village and fly to the woods. The man said that he did not know the road to Iztapan, the next place on my map, there being, as he said, no road overland, but that he would guide us more or less towards the vicinity in which he knew it was.

With this guide, I sent thirty Spaniards on horseback and thirty men on foot with instructions to discover the village of Iztapan, and, once there, to write me a description of the road I was to follow; for I decided not to leave the place where I had camped until I heard from them. They left, but, at the end of two days, having received no letters, nor other news, from them, and seeing, moreover, the extreme want to which we were reduced, I decided to follow them without a guide and with no other indication of the road they had taken than their footsteps in the fearful, miry swamps, with which the country is covered; for I assure Your Majesty that, even

on the hill tops, our horses, being led, and without their riders, sank to their girths in the mire. In this manner, I travelled two days on the said trail, without receiving any news of the people who had gone ahead; and I was perplexed enough as to what I should do, because to go back I held as impossible, and to proceed with no certainty of the road seemed equally so. God, Who in our greatest afflictions often comes to our help, was pleased to permit that, while we were encamping in great sadness and distress, believing we were all destined to perish of hunger, two Indians should arrive, bringing letters from the Spaniards whom I had sent ahead. They informed me that upon reaching the village of Iztapan, they found that the natives had sent all their women and property across a large river, which ran close to that place, and that the village itself was full of natives, who thought the Spaniards would not be able to pass the great swamp near by; but, when they saw my men swimming across it on their horses, they had been much frightened and had begun to burn their village, which my men prevented by putting out the fire. Seeing this, all the inhabitants fled to the banks of the river, which they crossed, either in numerous canoes or by swimming, and in their haste and confusion, which were very great, many were drowned; my Spaniards, nevertheless, had succeeded in capturing seven or eight, among whom there was one who seemed to be a chief; the letter also added that they were anxiously awaiting my arrival. I cannot describe to Your Majesty the great joy the receipt of this letter caused all my people, for, as I said above, we had almost despaired of relief.

March to Iztapan

Early the next morning, I continued my march, guided by the Indians who had brought the letter, and, in this manner, I arrived at Iztapan late in the evening, where I found all the people who had gone ahead very contented; for they had discovered many plan-

tations of maize, though the graln was not yet ripe, and also *yucas* and *agoes* [1] in great abundance, these latter two furnishing sustenance and constituting the food of the natives of the Islands. I immediately had brought before me those natives of the town who had been captured there, asking them through the interpreter why they had burned their own houses and towns and why they fled since I intended them no harm or mischief, but rather shared what I had with those whom I met. They answered that the chief of Çagoatan had come in a canoe and frightened them, inducing them to fire their town and abandon it. I had the chief and all the men and women who had been captured in Çagoatan and Chilapan and Tepetitan brought before me, and explained to them how that wicked man had deceived them, telling them they might inform themselves from those Indians now before me, by asking them whether I or any of my people had done them any harm or mischief, or if they had not been well treated in my company. Being informed by them, they all began to weep, declaring they had been deceived and showing great grief for what had happened. In order to reassure them, I gave permission to all the Indians, both men and women, who had come with me from the other villages to return to their homes, making them some small presents and giving them sundry letters which I ordered them to keep in their towns, and to show to any Spaniards who might pass there, because by them they would be protected. I also told them to explain to their chiefs the mistake they had committed in burning their houses and towns and in abandoning them, and that henceforth they must not act thus, but rather stop confidently in their homes as no harm or evil would be done them. After this, they left, well

[1] The root of the Yuca (vulgarly called Adam's needle) is farinaceous and edible: the Agoes or Aji are the red peppers so commonly used in Mexican dishes.

satisfied and contented, as were likewise the others who remained.

After this, I spoke to the Indian who seemed to be their chief, and told him to observe how I harmed no one about me; neither was my coming there for the purpose of offending them, but rather to make known many things to them which were advantageous, not only for the security of their lives and property, but also for the salvation of their souls. For the same reason I besought him earnestly to send two or three of his people, with whom I would send as many more of the natives of Temixtitan, to call the chief and tell him not to be afraid, for by his coming he would profit greatly. He answered that he would be pleased to do this, and he immediately sent his people with whom went the Indians of Mexico, and, the next morning, the messengers returned with the chief and some forty men. The chief told me he had abandoned his town and ordered it to be burned because the lord of Çagoatan had advised him to do this, and not to meet me, as I would kill them all, and that he had learned from those who had come to call him that he had been deceived, and that he was sorry for what had happened, praying me to pardon him, for henceforth he would obey me; and he besought me that certain women who had been captured by the Spaniards when they arrived should be restored to him, so twenty were immediately collected which pleased him greatly.

Punishment of Cannibalism

It happened, however, that a Spaniard saw an Indian of Temixtitan eating a piece of flesh taken from the body of an Indian who had been killed when they entered Iztapan, and he told me this; so in the presence of that chief I had the culprit burned, explaining that the cause was his having killed that Indian and eaten him which was prohibited by Your Majesty, and by me in Your Royal name. I further made the chief understand that all the peo-

ple of those parts must abstain from this custom, and that I had punished that man with death because he had slain and eaten a fellow creature, for I wished that none should be killed, but that, on the contrary, I came by order of Your Majesty to protect their lives as well as their property and to teach them that they were to adore but one God, who is in the heavens, Creator and Maker of all things, through whom all creatures live and are governed; and that they must turn from their idols, and the rites they had practised until then, for these were lies and deceptions which the devil, the enemy of the human race, had invented for deceiving them and to bring them to eternal damnation, where great and frightful torments awaited them; being thus deprived of the knowledge of God they could not be saved nor come into the enjoyment of glorious and eternal beatitude, which God had promised and has prepared for them who believe in Him; all of which the devil through his malice and evil doings had lost. I, likewise, had come to teach them that Your Majesty, by the will of Divine Providence, rules the universe, and that they also must submit themselves to the imperial yoke, and do all that we who are Your Majesty's ministers here might order them in Your Royal name; for, acting thus, they would be favoured and maintained in justice, and their lives and properties protected, but that, acting otherwise, they would be proceeded against and punished according to justice. I told them many things concerning these matters which, as they were lengthy, I do not repeat to Your Majesty.

The chief showed much satisfaction, and sent some of his people to bring provisions, and I gave him some presents from Spain, which he admired very much; and all the time he remained with me he was very contented. He ordered a road to be opened to another town, called Tatahuitalpan, five leagues up the

river from this, and, as we had to cross a very deep river, he had an excellent bridge made over it on which we crossed, and he filled in some very big swamps, and gave me three canoes in which I sent three Spaniards down the river to Tabasco (because this is the principal river which empties into it) where the ships were, as I have said, awaiting my orders. I sent orders with these Spaniards that they were to follow the coast until they doubled the cape, called Yucatan, after which they should proceed to the Bay of Ascension, where they would either find me or my orders as to what they were to do next. I also ordered the three Spaniards who went in the canoes and all those they could collect in the provinces of Tabasco and Xiculango to bring me as many provisions as they could by way of the great salt lagoon which connects with the province of Aculan, some forty leagues distant from Iztapan, where I would wait for them.

These Spaniards having departed, and the road being completed, I begged the chief of Iztapan to give me three or four other canoes in which to send up the river a half dozen Spaniards and some of his people, under a chief, to tranquillise the natives, and prevent them from burning and deserting their towns; he did this with every show of good will, and my people, being accompanied by Indians from Iztapan, succeeded in quieting the inhabitants of four or five villages up the river, as I shall hereafter relate to Your Majesty.

This town of Iztapan is very large and built on the bank of a very beautiful river. Its position is advantageous for a Spanish settlement, and the pasture is excellent along the banks of the river, while there is good farming land; and the country is well populated.

After stopping eight days in Iztapan, and having provided everything as specified in the former chapter, I left,

and arrived that day at the small town of Tatahuitalpan, and found it burned and deserted. I reached there before the canoes, which were coming up the river and were delayed by the strong currents and many windings. After their arrival, I sent some people to cross in them to the other bank in search of the natives of the town, in order to reassure them. About half a league on the other side of the river, they found some twenty men in one of the temples of their idols, which they had decorated profusely; these they brought to me, telling me that all the people had abandoned the place through fear, but they had preferred to remain on the spot and die with their gods. While engaged in this talk with them, some of our Indians passed, carrying some things taken from those idols, seeing which, the natives cried out that their gods had been killed; I replied to this, telling them to observe what a vain and foolish belief was theirs, for they believed that gods who could not even protect themselves could give them benefits, and to behold how easily they were destroyed: they answered me that their fathers had held that creed, and until they knew of a better one that they would hold it. I was unable, on account of the brevity of the time, to explain this subject more fully than I had already done to the people at Iztapan, but two Franciscan friars, who were with me, also told them many things about these matters. I besought them to send and call the chief and people of the town and to reassure them, and the chief whom I had brought from Iztapan also told them of the kindness they had received from me in his town, upon which they pointed out one of themselves, saying that he was their chief; so he sent two of them to call the people to return, but they never appeared.

Departure from Iztapan

Seeing that they did not come, I besought the one who I was told was the chief to show me the road to

Çagoatespan,[1] through which, according to my map, I would have to pass higher up this river; and he said that he did not know the way by land, but only by the river, as they all travelled that way, but that he would try to guide us through those forests, though he was uncertain whether he might reach there or not. I asked him to show me from there whereabouts it stood; and I marked it the best I could, and ordered the Spaniards of the canoes and the Chief of Iztapan to go up the river to the said town of Çagoatespan and reassure its people and those of another town, which they would come to first, called Ozumazintlan; if I arrived first I would wait for them, otherwise they should wait for me. Having despatched these men, I departed with the native guides and, leaving the town, I came to a great marsh, more than half a league in length, which we managed to pass, after the Indians our friends, had lain down branches and underbrush. We next came to a deep lagoon over which we were obliged to build a bridge for the passage of the heavy baggage and the saddles, whilst the horses crossed swimming. After that, we came to another deep lagoon, more than a league long, where the water was never below the knees of the horses, and many times up to the girths, but, as the bottom was rather solid, we crossed without accident, and reached the forest through which we cut our way as best we could during two consecutive days, until our guides said they were bewildered and knew not whither they were going. The forest was such that we could see nothing but the ground where we stood, or, looking upwards, the sky above our heads, such were the height and density of the trees; and although some climbed up them, they could not see a stone's throw ahead.

When those who were ahead with the guides opening

[1] Singuatepecpan, various spellings, Bernal Diaz calls it Ciguatepecad.

the roads sent me word that they were lost, I ordered them to stop where they were and went ahead on foot till I came up with them and saw the bewilderment in which they were; I made the people turn back to a small marsh we had crossed the day before, and where there was some pasturage for the horses, since they had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours. We remained there that night, suffering much from hunger, and hopeless of finding any populated place, so that my people were more dead than alive. I consulted my compass by which I had often guided myself, though never had we been in such a plight as this, and, remembering the direction in which the Indians said the town stood, I calculated that, by going towards the north-east from where we were we would come out at, or very near to, the town; so I ordered those who were ahead opening the road to take the compass with them and follow that direction without deviating from it. Our Lord was pleased that they should come out so exactly that, at the hour of vespers, they came upon some temples of the idols in the centre of the town, which caused such rejoicing among the people that they all ran to the town as though almost out of their senses, and, not observing a large marsh at its entrance, many of the horses sank in it so that some could not be got out until the following day, God being pleased, however, that none should perish; and we who came in the rear avoided the swamp, though with considerable difficulty.

Arrival at Singuatepeçpan

We found Çagoatespan entirely burned; even to the mosques and houses of their idols, nor did we find any people there, nor news of the canoes which were ascending the river. There was plenty of maize, riper than that of other places, also *yuca* and *agoes*, and good pasture for the horses on the banks of the river, which are very fertile and covered with fine grass. Thus refreshed, our past troubles

were forgotten, although I was uneasy at hearing nothing from the canoes. Walking about this village and inspecting it, I found a cross-bow arrow stuck in the ground, by which I knew that the canoes had been there, for all of the men in them were archers; this grieved me, leading me to believe they had fought there and been killed, since none of them appeared. To ascertain the truth, if possbile, I sent some of my people, in certain small canoes which were found there, to explore the river on the other side. They soon met a great number of Indians, and saw many cultivated fields, and, proceeding on their way, they reached a large lake where all the people of the town, partly in canoes and partly on small islands, had collected; who, when they saw the Christians, came to meet them very confidently, though without understanding what they said. Thirty or forty were brought to me, and, after I had spoken to them, they said that they had burned their town at the instigation of the chief of Çagoatespan, and had gone to the lakes out of fear; and that, afterwards, some Christians of my party, had come there in canoes, accompanied by natives of Iztapan, from whom they heard of the good treatment shown to everybody, which had reassured them; and that the Christians had stopped there two days waiting for me, but, as I had not come, they had gone up the river to another town, called Petenecte,[1] accompanied by the brother of their chief and four canoes full of people to help them in case that other town should be hostile; and that they had been given all the provisions they needed. I greatly rejoiced at this news, and believed them, seeing they came so confidently to me, and were so well disposed. I, therefore, prayed them to immediately

[1] Petenacte: also Penacte. As these names belong for the most part to obscure Indian villages which appear on no map, and are written with every variety of spelling, correction is undertaken only when it seems important to identify a spot by its correct geographical name.

send a canoe with people in search of these Spaniards, and to take a letter of mine, ordering them to return to that place forthwith. This they executed with diligence enough, and I gave them my letter for the Spaniards; so, the next day, at the hour of vespers, the latter arrived accompanied by the townspeople who had gone with them, and the four other canoes full of people and provisions from the town whence they had come; and they told me that they had crossed the river higher up after leaving me, arriving at Ozumazintlan, which they found burned and deserted; and that the natives of Iztapan who accompanied them, had searched for the people and called them, so that many had come very confidently, bringing them provisions and everything they had asked for. And thus, they had left them in their town, and afterwards had gone to Çagoatespan, which they also found deserted, the inhabitants having gone to the other side of the river; but the people of Iztapan had spoken to them, so they had come back rejoicing, and had given the Spaniards a good reception and all the provisions they required. They had waited there for me two days, and, as I did not come, they thought I had gone higher up, so they went on accompanied by the people of that village to the next town, Petenecte, which is six leagues from there, finding it also deserted but not burned, and the people on the other side of the river; but the people of Iztapan and those of Çagoatespan had reassured the natives, and induced them to come in four canoes to see me, and bring me maize and honey and *cacao* and a little gold. They had sent two messengers to three more villages up the river, named Coazacoalco, Caltencingo, and Tautitan, so they believed that people from those places would come to speak to me there on the following day. And so it happened that some seven or eight canoes came down the river the next day bringing people from all these towns, who gave me

provisions and a little gold. I spoke very fully to them, trying to make them understand that they were to believe in one God and serve Your Majesty; and they all offered themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Highness, and promised to obey whatever was commanded of them. The natives of Çagoatespan brought me some of their idols, and in my presence broke and burned them, and the principal chief, who until then had not appeared, arrived, bringing me a little gold, and I gave them all presents of such as I had, which pleased and reassured them very much.

There was some difference of opinion amongst them about the road I was to take to Acalan, for those of Çagoatespan said my road lay through the villages up the river and that they had caused six leagues of road to be opened expressly in that direction, and ordered a bridge to be built over a certain river which we had to cross. Others maintained that this road, besides being a very bad one, was much longer, and that the best and shortest road to Acalan was to cross the river at the town where we were, for a trail existed there which traders sometimes took, by which they would guide me as far as Acalan. Finally it was settled amongst them that this was the best road, so I sent a Spaniard ahead, with some natives of Çagoatespan, to inform the people of Acalan of my coming, and to reassure them and calm their fears. The messenger was also to ascertain whether my people, who had been charged with bringing supplies from the brigantines, had arrived or not. Afterwards, I sent four other Spaniards by land with guides who claimed to know the road, to inspect it, and see if there were any obstacles, while I waited for their answer; after they left, I was obliged to depart before hearing from them, so that the provisions provided for the journey should not be exhausted, for I was told that we would march for five or six days through a desert country. I began, therefore,

to prepare canoes, and to cross the river which was sufficiently dangerous, as it was broad, and its current so very strong that one horse was drowned and some of the Spaniards' baggage was lost. After crossing, I sent a couple of foot soldiers ahead with guides to open the road, whilst I, with the others, followed in the rear; and having travelled three days through a mountainous district, covered with forests, we came by a narrow trail to a large marsh, more than five hundred paces broad, to cross which we sought in vain to find a place; but one could not be found, neither up nor down, and the guides declared that it was useless to search for it unless we marched for twenty days towards the mountain chain.

Cortes Builds the Great Bridge

This marsh occasioned more trouble than I can say, for to cross it seemed impossible, on account of its great size and of our having no canoes, though even had we had them the men and horses and heavy baggage could not have crossed, for both sides were surrounded by morasses, full of stumps and roots of trees, while to cross the horses in any other way was entirely hopeless; to think of turning back plainly meant the destruction of everybody, not only on account of the bad roads, and the heavy rain which had fallen and had so swollen the river that the bridge we had left was already destroyed, but also because the people were perfectly exhausted, and, having consumed our provisions, we would find nothing to eat; for we were numerous, there being, besides the Spaniards and the horses, more than three thousand natives with me. I have already told Your Majesty the difficulties in the way of advancing, and that no man's brain was equal to devising relief if God, Who is the true help and succour of all the afflicted, had not provided it. For I found a very small canoe, in which the Spaniards whom I had sent ahead to explore the road had crossed, and with it I sounded the marsh and found it to be four

fathoms deep; so I had some lances tied together to examine the bottom and found that, besides the depth of the water, there were two fathoms of mud, so that in all there were six fathoms. Finally I determined to make a bridge over it and set about distributing the work to be done, and the wood to be cut, among the different people: the beams were to be from nine to ten fathoms in length according to the part which would remain above water. I charged the chiefs who had come with me to cut and bring a certain number of trees, each in proportion to the number of his people, and the Spaniards and I, on rafts and with that little bit of a canoe and two others which we afterwards found, began to lay the timbers. Everybody thought it was impossible to complete it, and, behind my back, some of them even said it would have been better to go the roundabout way before the people became too exhausted to be prevented afterwards from returning, for in the end this work would never be finished and we should be forced to go back. This murmuring spread to such an extent that they almost dared to utter it to me; and as I saw them so despondent, and in truth they had reason because of the character of the work we had undertaken, and because they were reduced to eating roots and herbs, I ordered them to take no part in building the bridge, for I would do it with the Indians. So I immediately sent for all the chiefs and told them to consider the great strait to which we were reduced, and that we were forced either to cross or to perish; hence I besought them earnestly to exhort their people to finish that bridge, for, once across, we would have immediately before us a large province, called Acalan, where there was abundance of provisions, and there we would rest; and that besides the provisions of the country they knew I had sent to have supplies brought from the ships, and that people would bring them in canoes, so that there we would have great abundance of everything.

Besides all this, I promised them that, on our return to Medellin, they would be well rewarded by me in Your Majesty's name. They promised me that they would work to that end, and they divided the task among them, and worked so hard and with such skill that, in less than four days, they constructed a fine bridge over which all the people and horses crossed; and, unless it is intentionally destroyed, which would have to be done by burning it, it will last for more than ten years, as more than one thousand beams were used, the smallest of them as big round as a man's body, and from nine to ten fathoms in length, without counting the smaller number. I certify to Your Majesty that I do not believe anyone capable of describing the system they displayed in building this bridge; I can only say that it is the most wonderful thing that has ever been seen.

All the people and horses having crossed to the other side of the lagoon, we came upon a great morass, two bow shots long, the most frightful thing men ever saw, where the unsaddled horses sank to their girths, and by their efforts to get out only sank deeper, so that we despaired of saving any of them or crossing ourselves; still we set to work, and, by putting bundles of herbs and branches under them, they could support themselves so as not to sink altogether, by which measure they were somewhat relieved. Thus we were engaged going backwards and forwards to the assistance of the horses, when a narrow channel of water and mud was discovered where the animals began to swim and advance a little, so that with our Lord's help they all came out safe though so exhausted from the exertion that they could scarcely stand on their legs. We gave many thanks to our Lord for His great mercy extended to us.

Just then the Spaniards whom I had sent to Acalan arrived with about eighty Indians from that province loaded with supplies of maize and birds, which God knows

the rejoicing it caused, especially when they told us that all the people were peaceable and well disposed. With the Indians of Acalan there came two of their notables sent by a chief of the province, called Apaspolon, to tell me that he greatly rejoiced at my coming as many days had passed since he first heard of me from the traders of Tabasco and Xiculango, and he would be glad to know me, and he sent me some gold which they gave me. I received them with pleasure thanking their lord for the good disposition he showed towards Your Majesty's service; and, giving them some small presents I sent them back, very contented, accompanied by the Spaniards who had come with them. They left full of admiration at beholding the bridge, which contributed largely towards the confidence which afterwards prevailed, for, as their country lies among lakes and swamps they might have taken refuge among them, but, seeing that work, they were convinced that nothing was impossible to us.

About this time, there also arrived a messenger from the town of Santisteban del Puerto, on the River Panuco, bringing me letters from the judges of those parts, and with him came some four or five Indian messengers who brought me letters from Temixtitan, Medellin, and the town of Espiritu Santo, from which I was much pleased to learn that they were well, although I had no news from the factor and the inspector, for they had not yet arrived at Temixtitan.

The day after the Indians and Spaniards who were going ahead to Acalan had left, I started, with the rest of the people, to follow in the same direction. I slept one night in the woods, and the next day, a little after noon, we arrived at the plantations and farms of the Province of Acalan, from which we were still separated by a large morass, the crossing of which gave us much trouble, though we accomplished it by making a detour

of about a league, leading our horses by their bridles. About the hour of vespers, we reached the first village, called Ticatepelt, whose inhabitants we found living comfortably in their houses and showing no signs of fear; they had plenty of food, both for the men and horses, so that we were completely refreshed and forgot our past troubles. We rested six days, during which time a youth, of attractive appearance and well attended, visited me and told me that he was the son of the lord of that country; and he brought me some gold and birds, offering himself and his country for Your Majesty's service, saying that his father had lately died. I sympathised over the death of his father, although I perceived that he was not telling me the truth, and I gave him a collar of Flemish beads which I was wearing on my neck and which he greatly esteemed, after which I told him to leave with God's blessing; but he remained two days longer of his own free will.

Human Sacrifices

One of the natives of Ticatepelt who claimed to be the chief told me that there was in the neighbourhood another village, also belonging to him, where I would find better lodging and more abundant supplies, for it was larger and more populous, and suggested, also, that, if I went thither, I would be more comfortable; so I at once accepted his proposal, and ordered him to have the road cleared by his men, and lodgings prepared, all of which was done as I wished; and we went to that town, which is six leagues from here, and found the people tranquil, and a certain quarter vacated for our lodging. It is a beautiful town, called Teutiercas by the natives, and has very handsome mosques or houses for idols wherein we established ourselves, throwing out their gods, at which the natives showed little concern; for I had already spoken to them and explained their errors and that there was only one God, the Creator of all things. Afterwards

I spoke more fully to the principal chief and to all of them together, and I learned from them that the principal one of these two mosques was dedicated to a goddess in whom they had faith and hope, and that they sacrificed only the most beautiful virgins to her, for otherwise she would be angry with them, and therefore they took special care to search for such as would satisfy her; and they reared the most beautiful ones from childhood for this purpose. I spoke of this horrible cruelty in which the devil with his arts had taken them, and I also told them what seemed to be necessary; and they appeared to be satisfied.

The Chief Apaspolon

The chief of the town showed himself my great friend and held much conversation with me, giving me a full account and description of the Spaniards, for whom I was going to search, and the road I should take; and he told me in great secrecy, praying that no one should know that he had informed me, that Apaspolon, lord of all that province, was alive, though he had sent to say that he was dead; the young man who came to see me was his son and had been sent to misdirect me so that I might not see his country and towns. He gave me this information out of friendship, and because of the good treatment he had received from me, but prayed me that this should be kept strictly secret, for, if it became known that he had informed me, the lord would kill him and burn his town. I thanked him very much, and rewarded his good will with some small presents, and promised to keep the secret as he asked me to do; I also promised him that as time went on he would be well rewarded by me in Your Majesty's name.

I immediately sent for the son of Apaspolon and told him that I marvelled very much that his father should have refused to come knowing as he did my good disposition towards all of them and my wish to honour them and make them presents, for I had received good treat-

ment in their country and greatly desired to repay them; but I knew for certain that he was alive and I prayed him to go and call him and to persuade him to come and see me, for he might be sure that he would be benefited by so doing. The son told me that it was true he was alive, and that if he had denied this to me, it was because he had been commanded to do so by his father; but that he would go and endeavour to bring him; and he believed that he would come, for he desired to know me, feeling sure I had not come thither to harm him, but on the contrary to give presents to him and his people. He would have come before except that, as he had given himself out as dead, he was now ashamed to appear before me. I besought the youth to go and use every means to bring him; and thus it was done, and the next day both came. I received them with much pleasure, the chief excusing himself because he had not known my disposition; and he said that now, having learnt it, he desired greatly to see me, and that it was true he had ordered me to be misdirected away from his towns, but that now he prayed me to come to the principal one where he resided, as there he had better arrangements for providing me and my people with everything we required.

He immediately ordered a broad road to be opened thither, and, the next day, we left together; and I ordered one of my horses to be given him, on which he rode very happily till we reached the town, called Izancanac, which is quite large, and has many mosques, and is situated on the borders of a great lagoon which traverses the country as far as the ports of Terminos, Xicalango, and Tabasco; some of the people of this town were absent and others stopped in their houses. We found a great store of provisions, and Apaspolon remained with me in my lodging, though he had his own household close by. As long as I remained at Izancanac, he rendered me service, and gave me a lengthy account of the Spaniards I sought,

pointing out to me on a drawing of cloth the road I ought to take. He also gave me some gold and women without my asking for them, and I declare that up till now I have never asked the chiefs of these parts for anything unless they first offered it. We had to cross that lagoon before which extended the large morass; the chief ordered a bridge to be made over it, and provided as many canoes as were necessary for crossing the morass, and gave me guides for the road. He also gave me canoes and guides to accompany the Spaniards who had brought the letters and messages from Santisteven del Puerto, as well as several others for the Indians who were returning to Mexico and to the provinces of Tabasco and Xicalango. I sent letters again by these Spaniards to the authorities of the different towns and the lieutenants whom I had left in this city, as well as to the ships at Tabasco, and for the Spaniards who were to bring the provisions instructing each and every one of them what they were to do. Having despatched all these, I gave the chief certain small presents which he esteemed, and leaving him entirely satisfied, and all the people reassured, I left that province on the first Sunday of Lent in the year 1525.

That day, we accomplished only the crossing of the lagoon, which was no small thing. I gave this lord a letter because he begged me to do so, as, in case any Spaniards should come there later, they would thus learn that I had passed there and considered him my friend.

An event happened in this province which it is well Your Majesty should know. An honourable citizen of Temixtitan, by name Mexicalcingo, but now called Cristobal, came to me one night privately, bringing certain drawings on a piece of the paper used in that country, and explained to me what it meant. He told me that Guatemucin,

Death of Quauhtemotzin

whom, on account of his turbulent nature, I hold a prisoner since the capture of this city (always carrying him, as well as the other chiefs and lords whom I considered the cause of revolt in the country with me) was conspiring against me. Besides Guatemucin there was Guanacaxin, the King of Texcuco, and Tetepanguçal, the King of Tacuba, and a certain Tacatelz who had lived formerly in Mexico in the quarter of Tatelulco, who all had many times conversed among themselves and told this Mexicalcingo how they had been dispossessed of their land and authority and were ruled over by the Spaniards, and that it would be well to seek some remedy so that they might recover their authority and possessions; and, in speaking thus, during this expedition, they had thought the best way would be to kill me and my people, and afterwards to call on the natives of these provinces to rise and kill Cristobal de Olid and all his people. After that they would send their messengers to Temixtitan to incite the people to kill all the Spaniards, which thing they thought could easily be done as many were newly arrived and untrained to warfare. After that, they would raise the whole country, and kill all the Spaniards wherever they might be found, putting strong garrisons of natives in all the seaports so that none might escape, nor any vessel coming from Castile take back the news. By these means, they would rule again as before, and they had already distributed the different provinces amongst themselves, giving one to this same Mexicalcingo. I gave many thanks to our Lord for having revealed this treachery to me, and, at daybreak, I imprisoned all those lords, each one by himself, and then inquired of them one by one about the plot; and to each I said that the others had told it to me (for they could not speak with one another). Thus they were all constrained to confess that it was true that Guatemucin and Tetepangueçal had invented the plot, and that,

though the others had heard it, they had never consented to take part.[1] These two, therefore, were hanged, and I set the others free because it appeared they were to blame for nothing more than having listened to it, although

[1] The Indian version of Quauhtemotzin's execution, given by Torquemada, who copied it from a Mexican MS., is quitc different from the one Cortes gives the Emperor. Cohuanocox, King of Texcoco, spoke privately at Izancanac with his fellow prisoners, saying that were their people not what they were, thcir Kings would not be so easily reduced to slavery and marched about behind the Spanish commander, and that it would in reality be casy enough to repay Cortes for burning Quauhtemotzin's fcet. At this point the others stopped him, but a Mexican, who is called Mexicalcin by early writers and was baptised as Christopher had overheard and reported the words to Cortes, who, without morc ado hanged thc three Princes that night on a Ceiba tree. Torquemada exprcsses the opinion that Cortes was weary of guarding the royal captives, and yet dared not free them, and was glad to use the first pretext to kill them.

Bernal Diaz states that both Quauhtemotzin and Tetepanquezatl protested their entire innocence, and that all the Spaniards disapproved of the execution.

Cortes dared much, and there was little articulate public opinion in Mexico whose voice he could not control, but it is doubtful if he would have dared to hang the last three Kings on such vague charges reported by a camp servant, with all Mexico looking on. This, the blackest decd of his life, was done in an obscure part of a remote wilderness.

It were not strange that the royal captives should have talked of their misfortunes and sufferings, when they thought they were alone, or have discussed how it all might have been prevented, or even repaired, but it is a far cry from such communings over their camp-fire to the organisation of a plot to kill their captor and raise a general insurrection against the Spaniards. There secms no discoverable justification for this barbarous and treacherous act. It needed no gift of prophecy for Quauhtemotzin to foresee his fate when he fcll into Cortes's hands, and the choice he then expressed for immediate death proved that he cherished no illusions as to what the future hcld for him. Prescott, in describing the inglorious end of the last Aztec Empcror, says: "might we not rathcr call him thc last of the Aztecs, since from this time, broken in spirit and without a head, the remnant of the nation resigned itself almost without a struggle to the stern yoke of its oppressors?"

It is said that Cortes was disquieted in his conscience after this "execution," and for a long time could not slecp. The murdered captives were: Quauhtemotzin, Emperor of Mcxico; Cohuanacox;

this alone was sufficient for them to deserve death; their case, however, remains open so that at any time they relapse they may be punished accordingly, though it is not probable that they will again conspire, for they think that I discovered this by some magic, and that nothing can be hidden from me; for they have noticed that to direct the making of the road I often consult the map and the compass, especially when the road approaches the sea, and they have often said to the Spaniards that they believed I learnt it by that compass; also they have sometimes said, wishing to assure me of their good disposition, that I might know their honest intentions by looking into the glass and on the map, and that there I would see their sincerity since I knew everything by this means. I also allowed them to think that this was true.

This province of Acalan is very large, and well populated; many of its towns were visited by my Spaniards. It abounds in honey and other products and there are many merchants who trade in different places and who are rich in slaves and merchandise. It is completely surrounded by lagoons, all of which extend to the bay and port called Los Terminos, by means of which they carry on a considerable trade by water with Xiculango and Tabasco. It is believed, also, though the exact truth is not known, that the lagoons extend to the other sea, thus making the country known as Yucatan an island: I shall endeavour to ascertain the secret of this so as to inform Your Majesty truthfully about it. According to what I learn, they

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King of Texcoco; Tetlepanquetzal, King of Tlacopan; Oquizi, King of Atzcapotzalco; Vehichilzi, brother of Quauhtemotzin and King of Michuacan; and the two Indian Generals, Xihmocoatl and Tlacatle. Humboldt (*Essai Polit.*, lib. iii., cap. viii.) describes an Indian picture-writing, representing the hanging of these prisoners by their feet to prolong their sufferings, which he saw in Mexico.

Quauhtemotzin's widow, Princess Tecuichpo, who was a daughter of Montezuma, had already had one husband, Cuitlahuatzin, and, afterwards married successively three different Spaniards.

have no other lord save this Apaspolon, whom I have mentioned above to Your Majesty, and he is the richest trader and has the greatest shipping traffic of anybody. His commerce is very extensive, and at Nito, a town of which I will hereafter speak, and where I met the Spaniards of Gil Gonzales de Avila's party, there is an entire quarter peopled with his agents under command of one of his brothers. The chief articles of merchandise in those provinces are *cacao*, cotton cloth, colours for dyeing, and a kind of stain with which they smear their bodies to protect them against heat and cold; tar for lighting purposes, resine from pines for the incensing of their idols, slaves, and certain red beads of shells which they greatly esteem for ornamenting their persons in their feasts and festivities; they trade in some gold, which is mixed with copper and other alloys.

To this Apaspolon, as well as to other notable persons of the province who came to see me, I spoke as I had to all the others on the road respecting their idols and what they ought to do to save their souls, and to what they were bound in Your Majesty's service. They appeared to accept what I said with satisfaction, and they burned many of their idols in my presence, saying that henceforth they would no longer honour them, and promising that they would obey everything commanded of them in Your Majesty's name; upon which I took my leave of them and departed as I have said above.

Three days before leaving this province of Acalan, I sent ahead four Spaniards, with two guides whom the chief had given me, to explore the road to the province of Mazatlan, which in their language is called Quiacho. They had told me that for four days I would have to cross the deserted country, sleeping in the forest, so I ordered the men to inspect the country well, and see if there were any rivers or swamps to cross; and at the same time I directed that my people should take supplies

for six days so as not to be again in such another strait as before. There being an abundance of everything, this was done, and, five leagues beyond a certain lagoon which we crossed, I met the four Spaniards who had explored the road with the guides; and they told me they had found a very good road, which, although it led through the heart of the forest, was level and without rivers or swamps to obstruct us, and that, without being seen themselves, they had reconnoitred some villages where they had seen people, and had then returned. I rejoiced greatly at this news, and sent six active foot soldiers ahead with some Indians, our friends, to keep always a league in advance of those who were opening the road, with orders that if they should meet any traveller, to seize him so that we might arrive in the provinces unexpected, for I wished to prevent the people from burning and deserting their towns as those before them had done.

That day, they found two Indians, natives of Acalan, near a lake, who said they were coming from Mazatlan where they had traded salt for cotton clothing, which indeed appeared, in a measure, to be true, for they were loaded with clothing. When brought before me, and asked if the people of that province knew about my coming, they answered no, saying that they were all perfectly quiet; so I told them they must return with me, and not to be disturbed as they would lose nothing of what they carried, but that, on the contrary, I would give them more, and that upon our arrival at that province they might return, for I was a great friend of all the natives of Acalan, and had received great kindness from its lord and people. They were quite willing to do this, and returned, guiding us by another road than the one first opened by my Spaniards, which led only to some plantations, whereas theirs led directly to the towns.

We passed that night in the forest, and, the next day, the Spaniards who went ahead as scouts met four natives

of Mazatlan, with their bows and arrows, who were apparently sentries on the road, and who, on the approach of our people, wounded one of our men with their arrows, after which they fled, and, the forest being so dense, only one was captured; this one was given in charge to three of my Indians, and the Spaniards ran on believing that there were more of them; but, no sooner had the Spaniards gone, than the fugitives, who, as it appeared, had concealed themselves close by, returned, and fell upon our Indian friends who held their companion a prisoner, and, fighting with them, they liberated him. Mortified by this, our Indians pursued their enemies through the forest, and, having overtaken them, they fought with them, and wounded one by a great gash in the arm, taking him prisoner, while the others escaped, for they perceived that some of our people were coming up. I asked this Indian if his countrymen knew of my coming, and he answered that they did not; I then asked why he and his companions had been there as sentries, and he answered that this was their custom, for they were at war with some of their neighbours, and, to protect their farms, the lord had ordered sentinels always to be kept on the road to forestall any surprise. Having learnt from him that the first village of that province was near at hand, I made all possible haste to arrive there before any of his companions who had fled should give the alarm, and I ordered those of my people who went ahead to stop as soon as they came in sight of the plantations and to hide themselves in the forest until I arrived.

When I came to the place, it was already late, so I made haste, thinking we might reach the town that night, but, perceiving that our baggage train was somewhat scattered, I ordered a captain, with twenty horsemen, to remain at the plantations and collect the bearers as they came up, and, after sleeping there with them, to

follow my trail. I took a narrow path through the forest which was level and straight enough, but through such a dense growth that I walked leading my horse; and all my people followed me, one behind the other, in like manner. We marched in this wise until nightfall, when we were stopped by a morass which could not be traversed without first making some preparations; seeing which, I gave orders which were passed from one man to the other to return to a small cabin we had passed in the evening, and there we spent the night, though neither we nor the horses had any water.

The next morning, after preparing the morass with branches of trees so as to pass it, we crossed, though with much difficulty, leading our horses, and, three leagues beyond the place where we had passed the night, we beheld a town built upon a hill. Thinking that we had not been seen, I approached it with caution, and found it was so completely closed round that we could discover no entrance. At last we discovered one, but found the town abandoned, though full of provisions of all kinds, such as maize, fowls, honey, beans, and other products of the country, for, as the inhabitants were taken by surprise, they had no time to carry off their provisions which, as it was a fortified town, were very plentiful. The town is situated upon a lofty rock, having a great lake on one side and on the other a deep stream which empties into the lake; there is but one accessible entrance, and all is surrounded by a deep moat behind which there is a palisade, breast high; and beyond this palisade there is an enclosure of very thick planks, two fathoms high, with loop-holes at all points from which to shoot arrows; its watch towers rise seven or eight feet higher than the said wall, which was also provided with towers, on the top of which were many stones with which to fight from above. All the houses of the town had loop-holes and were fortified, while the streets were

provided in the best possible manner; I speak with reference to the kind of arms with which they fight.

I sent some of the natives to search for the inhabitants of the town, and they brought me two or three whom I then sent, accompanied by one of those traders from Acalan whom I had captured on the road, to find the chief, and to tell him in my name not to be frightened; for I had not come to do him or his people any harm, but rather to help him in the wars he was carrying on, so as to leave him and his country in a state of peace and security. Two days later, the messengers returned, bringing with them an uncle of the lord of the country who was governing during his nephew's minority; the lord himself did not come, for he said he was afraid, but I spoke to the uncle and reassured him, after which he escorted me to another village of the same province, seven leagues further on, called Tiac, which was much larger than the former and equally well fortified, though not so strong since it was situated in a plain. Like the other town, it had strong palisades, a deep moat, and watch towers, and each of the three quarters into which it was divided had its own fortifications, while the whole was encircled by an outer wall stronger than the others. I had sent to this village two companies of cavalry and one of foot soldiers each under a captain, but upon their arrival they found it entirely deserted, though full of provisions; my men, however, managed to capture seven or eight natives near by, some of whom they had set at liberty so that they might go and speak to their chief, and tranquillise the people. They succeeded so well in this that, before my arrival at the place, its chief had already sent messengers with a present of provisions and cotton clothing.

Arrival at Tiac

After I arrived, the natives returned at two different times to bring us food and to speak with us, not only on the part of the lord of this town, but also on behalf

of five or six others in this province, each of whom was independent, and everyone of whom offered himself as vassal of Your Majesty and our friend, though I never could induce those lords to come and see me. As I had no time to waste, I sent them word that I received them in Your Highness's name and asked them to furnish me guides for my journey; this they did very willingly, giving me one who not only knew the country as far as the town where the Spaniards were whom I came to search for, but had also seen them. Thereupon I left the town of Tiac, sleeping that night at another, called Yasuncabil, which is the last in the province; this was surrounded by palisades, as the other two, but deserted. We found there a most beautiful house of the chief built entirely of straw. We provided ourselves there with everything required for the march, for the guide told us we had five days' journey in the desert before reaching the Province of Taiza which we had to traverse; and it turned out that this was true.

In this Province of Mazatlan, or Quiatcho as it is called, I dismissed the two traders whom I had stopped on the road, as well as the guides from Acalan, giving them some presents, both for themselves, and for their chief, so they went off very contented. I also dismissed to his home the chief of the first town who had come with me, giving him some of his women who had been captured in the forest; I also gave him some other small presents at which he was much pleased.

Cortes Arrives at Peten-Itza

Having left the Province of Mazatlan, I continued my march towards that of Taiza sleeping four nights on the road in that deserted country. My way led over high and rocky mountains, and I had to cross a dangerous pass of which all the rocks were of very fine alabaster, hence I named it Puerto del Alabastro. On the fifth day, the scouts who went ahead with the guides discovered a great lake which seemed to

be an arm of the sea and so large and deep is it that, although its waters are fresh, I even believe that it is so.[1] On a small island in this lake there stood a town which the guides said was the chief one of the Province of Taiza and that if we wished to reach it we could do so only in canoes; hearing this the Spaniards remained there keeping watch while one returned to report to me what had happened. I halted the people, and went ahead on foot to see that lake and its situation, and, upon arriving at that place, I found my scouts had succeeded in capturing an Indian, belonging to the town on the island, who, carrying arms, had come in a very small canoe to reconnoitre the road; and though taken by surprise he would have escaped had not one of our dogs overtaken him before he could spring into the water. I learned from this Indian that his countrymen knew nothing about my arrival. I asked him whether there was any way to reach the town on the island, and he answered that there was none, but that not far distant there was a narrow arm of the lake on the other side of which were some plantations and houses, and that, if we succeeded in reaching there without being seen, we were sure to find canoes. I immediately sent to order the people to follow me, and, accompanied by ten or twelve crossbowmen, I went on foot with the Indian and crossed a great stretch of swamp up to our waists in water, and sometimes even higher. In this manner, we reached the plantations, but, as the road was bad, and we could not always conceal ourselves, we had already been seen and when we got there the inhabitants were hastily taking to their canoes on the lake shore.

I marched along the shores for about two thirds of a

[1] This lake, some twelve leagues in length, was called by the natives *Hohuken* meaning "the mighty drinker," and is now known as Peten-Itza. Peten meaning lake, and Itza being the name of a Maya tribe. Needless to add that Cortes was wrong in thinking it was joined to the ocean.

league, passing plantations and houses; but everywhere we had been detected and the inhabitants were escaping in their canoes. It was already late, and I considered it useless to follow them, so I ordered my people to halt and camp at those plantations, taking the best precautions possible; for the guide of Mazatlan told me the people were numerous and warlike and much feared by all their neighbours. The guide then offered to go in that little canoe in which the Indian had come, and cross to that town on the island, a good two leagues distant where he would speak to the lord, whom he knew very well, and who is called Canec, telling him my intentions and the reason of my coming to his country, with which he himself was perfectly acquainted as he had accompanied me. He believed that the chief would be perfectly reassured and would believe what he told him, for he was well known to him and had often been in his house. I immediately gave him the canoe belonging to the Indian who had come in it, and, thanking him for his offer, I promised that if he carried it out successfully I would reward him to his entire satisfaction; and thus he went, and returned at midnight bringing with him two distinguished persons of the town who said they were sent by their lord to see me, and to inform themselves about what my messenger had said, and to learn what I wished. I received them very well, and made them some small presents, telling them that I had come to those countries by order of Your Majesty for the purpose of seeing them, and to acquaint the lords and chiefs of the land with matters touching Your Royal service and their own welfare; that I desired them to tell their lord to come and see me without fear, and proposed that, if he hesitated, one of my Spaniards should go to the island as a hostage during the time their chief was with me. They took back this message, accompanied by the guide, and one of thaniare Spds; and, the next day, the

chief, himself, escorted by about thirty men in five or six canoes came bringing with him the Spaniard I had given as a hostage. He seemed much pleased at meeting me, and I received him very well.

As it was the hour of mass when he arrived, I ordered it sung with great solemnity, accompanied by clarions and sackbuts to which he listened with great attention, observing all the ceremonies; and, when mass was finished, one of the Franciscan friars whom I had with me, preached a sermon which was translated by the interpreter so that he could easily understand, touching the matters of our Faith, and giving him to understand with many arguments how there was but one God, and the error of his sect. The chief displayed much satisfaction, and declared that he wished to destroy his idols immediately, and to believe in that God of whom we had spoken, and that he desired to know how he was to serve and honour Him, and that if I wished to come to his town I should see that he would burn the idols in my presence; and he desired that I should leave a cross in his town, as he had been told I had left one in all the towns through which I passed.

After this sermon, I again spoke to him, explaining Your Majesty's greatness and how he and all living creatures were the natural subjects and vassals of Your Imperial Highness, and bound to your service; that to those who did so Your Majesty granted all manner of favours which I, in Your Royal name, had dispensed to all those who had offered themselves to Your Royal service and placed themselves under Your Royal rule; I promised the same or greater to him. He answered that, until then, he had never recognised anyone as superior, nor had he known that there was any such one; that it was true that some five or six years ago some people from Tabasco passing through his country had told him how a captain with certain people of our nation

had been there and vanquished them in three battles, after which they had been told that they must become vassals of a great lord and many other things like what I was now telling him. He wanted to know therefore whether it was all one and the same thing. I answered him that I was the captain of whom the people of Tabasco had spoken as having fought with them in their country, of which he might assure himself from the interpreter with whom he was speaking, who is Marina whom I have always had with me since she was presented to me with twenty other women. She explained everything to him and how I had conquered Mexico, and told him of all the countries I had subjected and placed under the Empire of Your Majesty. He rejoiced greatly on learning this and said he desired to become a subject and vassal of Your Majesty, considering it a joy to be under so great a lord as I told him Your Highness was. He ordered birds, honey, and some gold, and beads made of red shells, which they highly prize, to be brought, and these he offered to me as a present, while I in return gave him some things I had brought with me, which he received with great pleasure.

After having dined with me, I explained how I came in search of those Spaniards who were on the sea coast, and who belonged to my company, and had been sent thither by me; and that many days had passed without news from them, and hence I came to seek them; and I besought him to tell me if he had any news of them. He answered that he knew a great deal about them, because, not far from the place where they were, he had certain vassals who worked the plantations of *cacao*, for that country was favourable to its growth; from them, and from many other traders who daily went to and fro, he constantly received news about them, and would give me a guide to take me to where they were. He told me, however, that the road was very rough, the mountains

very high and rocky, and that it would be less fatiguing to go by sea. I replied that he could see for himself that, on account of the numerous people and baggage and horses I had, there would not be sufficient boats, and therefore I was compelled to go by land; I asked him, however, to give me the means of crossing that lake, to which he replied that, about three leagues from the place where we were, the lake became shallow, and, by skirting it, I could reach the road opposite his village; but he begged me that, as my people were coming round the lake, I would accompany him in his canoe to visit his town and house where he wished to burn the idols and have a cross made for him. To please him, although it was against the will of my people, I embarked, with about twenty of my men, most of them archers, in his canoe and went to his town with him, where I spent the rest of the day in festivity. At nightfall, I took leave of him, and he gave me a guide with whom I entered the canoe and returned to sleep on land, where I met many of my people who had come round the lake to a place where we passed the night. In this town, or rather at the plantations, I left a horse which got a splinter in his foot and was unable to go on; the chief promised to cure it but I do not know what he will do with him.[1]

The next day, collecting my people, I set out,

[1] The fate of this animal was indeed a strange one. Villagutierra (in his *Hist. de la Conquista del Itza*) relates that some Franciscan monks who visited Peten-Itza in 1697, with Don Martin Ursua, landed with the intention of building a church on the island, and found there a large temple in which stood the image of a horse very well carved in stone. They discovered that Cortes's lame horse became an object of great veneration to the natives who fed him on flowers, birds, and similar delicacies with the natural result that the poor animal starved to death, after which he was ranked amongst the native deities and worshipped under the title of *Tziminchak*, god of thunder and lightning. It would appear from this that the Christian doctrines had not been so clearly understood by the chief and his people as Cortes imagined.

accompanied by the guides, and, about a half a league from our camping place, I came upon a small plain where there were some huts, beyond which was a small forest extending for about a league and a half; after which we again reached some beautiful plains, covered with grass, from which point I sent ahead some horsemen and foot soldiers with orders to stop and seize any natives they might find on their way, for the guides had told us we would arrive near a village that same night. We found these plains abounding in deer, so we hunted all that day on horseback, and speared eighteen of them, though, owing to the heat and the fact that our horses were in bad condition from the previous journey through mountainous and swampy districts, two of them died, and many others were in great danger. Our hunting finished, we continued our route, and, after a little while, I met some of the scouts ahead who had captured four Indian hunters, these latter having just killed a lion and some iguanas, a species of large lizard which are common in the island [lucerta eguana]. I learned from the hunters that their townsmen knew nothing about me, and they then pointed out to me the plantations from which they came, which were visible about one league and a half from where we were. I hastened thither, thinking I might arrive without difficulty, but, just as I thought I was about to enter the village, and could see the people moving about in it, we came upon a large lagoon which seemed to me very deep, and so I was delayed. I called to the Indians, and two of them came in a canoe, bringing about a dozen chickens, and approaching very near to where I was on horseback, standing in water up to the girths; but, although I remained talking with them quite a while, and trying to persuade them to approach the shore, they were afraid to do this, but rather retreated, and began to withdraw in their canoes to their town. The Spaniard

Departure from Peten-Itza

who was on horseback by my side spurred his horse through the waters and swam after them, which so frightened them that they abandoned their canoes, upon which some foot soldiers swam quickly after them and captured them. All the people we had seen in the town had completely deserted it. I asked those Indians where we could cross, and they showed me a road where, by a roundabout march of about a league, we would find a passage; so that we went that night to sleep in that town. It is eight leagues from our starting place, and is called Checan, and the name of its chief is Amohan.

I remained four days collecting supplies enough for six days more, for which time the guide told me we would march through a desert, and also waiting to see if the chief of the town, whom I had sent to call, would come, for I had assured him through those Indians I had captured; but neither he nor they appeared. Having collected all the provisions obtainable there, I left, and marched, the first day, through a very level and beautiful country, with no forests, save now and then. And, having travelled six leagues, we reached the foot of a great mountain range where we found a large house and two or three smaller ones situated near a river, all surrounded by maize plantations; the guides told me that the house belonged to Amohan, the chief of Checan, who kept it as an inn for the many traders passing that way. I stopped there one day besides that of my arrival, as it was a festival, and also because I wished to give the scouts who went ahead time to clear the road. We had very excellent fishing in the river near Checan, where we found a large number of shad which we took without difficulty, not one of those which entered the nets escaping.

The following day, we marched seven leagues through a rough and mountainous country, and spent the night on the banks of a large river. On the next day,

after about three leagues of very bad road, we reached a beautiful plain without woods, except a few pines; we killed seven deer in these plains, which extended for about two leagues, and we dined on the banks of a very fresh stream that flows through them. After dinner, we began to ascend a mountain pass, which, though small, was rough enough so that we had to lead our horses with some difficulty; and, after the descent, we again found half a league of plain, beyond which there was another mountain pass which was about two and a half leagues long, and so rough that there was not a horse left but that had lost his shoes. I slept at the foot of the pass near a stream, where I remained the next day until about the hour of vespers, waiting for the horses to be shod; and, although I had two smiths, and more than ten who helped drive the nails, they could not all be shod that day. So I went to sleep, three leagues farther on, while many Spaniards remained there, some to shoe their horses, and others to wait for the baggage, which, on account of the bad road and the heavy rains, had not come up.

I left there the next day because the guide told me that there was a hamlet, called Asuncapin, close by belonging to the lord of Taiza, where I would arrive in plenty of time to sleep; after marching four or five leagues we reached the said hamlet, and found it deserted; and there I lodged two days, waiting for the baggage and gathering provisions. This being accomplished, I went to a hamlet, called Taxuytel, where I slept, and which is five leagues from Tiaza, and belongs to Amohan the Lord of Checan; there were many *cacao* plantations and some of maize, although in smaller quantities and still green. Here the guides and the chief of these hamlets, whom we captured with his wife and his son, told me that we would have to cross a chain of high and rocky mountains all uninhabited, and that, after this, we would arrive at some other

hamlets, belonging to Canec, lord of Taiza, which were called Tenciz.

We did not stop here long, but departed the next day, and, having traversed about six leagues of level country, we began to ascend the mountain pass, which is one of the most marvellous things in the world to behold; for were I to try to describe its roughness and difficulties I would entirely fail to make anybody understand me. But, that Your Majesty may have some idea, I will say that, in crossing the eight leagues of this mountain pass, we spent twelve days, I mean until we reached the uttermost end of it; during which time, sixty-eight horses were lost by falling over precipices and being hamstrung, while all the others were so fatigued and injured that we hardly thought we could ever use them again, and more than three months passed before they were fit for service. During all the ascent of this dreadful pass, it poured rain day and night, but such was the character of the mountains that the water never collected anywhere so that we could drink it, and hence we suffered greatly from thirst and our horses perished on account of it; indeed, had it not been that we collected water in copper kettles and other vessels while camping in the ranches and huts we made to shelter us, not a man or horse would have escaped alive. During this crossing, a nephew of mine fell and broke his leg in three or four places, and, aside from the suffering he endured, this increased our difficulties, because we had to carry him.

The Dangerous Pass

Our troubles were not yet at an end; for, about a league before reaching the hamlets of Tenciz, which, as I said before, are on the other side of the mountains, we were stopped by a very large river, so swollen by the recent rains that it was impossible to cross it. The Spaniards who had gone ahead had followed up the river and found the most marvellous ford which has ever been seen or

thought of, for the river spread out for upwards of two thirds of a league, owing to certain large rocks, between the crevices of which the water flows with most frightful force. There are many places where the rocks lie so close together that we managed to cross by cutting down large trees and laying them from one rock to another and holding fast by creepers which were tied from one side to the other, for had anyone lost his footing and fallen he would have been certainly lost. There were more than twenty of these channels to cross, so that it took us two days, and the horses crossed lower down where the current was less swift; but though the distance to Tenciz was only one league, as I said before, many of them were three days in arriving there; such was their broken-down condition after their march across the mountains that my men were almost obliged to carry them, for they could scarcely walk.

I reached Tenciz on the day before Easter[1] though many of my people did not arrive until three days afterwards; I mean those who had horses and had been delayed in looking after them. The Spaniards whom I had sent ahead had arrived two days before me, and, taking possession of two or three of the above mentioned hamlets, had captured some twenty odd Indians, who, being unaware of my presence in those parts, had been surprised. I asked them if they had any provisions, and they said no; nor could any be found in all the country, which considerably augmented our misfortunes, as, during the past ten days, we had eaten nothing except cores of palm trees and palmettos, and even of these we had not enough, so that we were so weak we had scarcely the strength to cut them down. One of the chiefs, however, told me that, by ascending the river a day's journey (which river had again to be crossed at the same dangerous

Easter Day 1525

[1] Easter fell in the year 1525, on May 15th.

spot) there was the large town of a province, called Tahuyecal, where we would find abundant provisions of maize, *cacao*, and fowls, and that he would give us a guide to lead us there. I immediately sent one of my captains with thirty foot soldiers and more than one thousand of the Indians who came with us thither, and our Lord was pleased that they should find a great abundance of maize, and plenty of people, so that we supplied ourselves, although it was with difficulty on account of the distance.

From this hamlet, I sent certain crossbowmen with a native guide to explore the road we were to take to the province, called Acuculin; and they reached a village of the said province some ten leagues from where I had stopped and six from the chief town of the province, whose lord is called Acahuilguin. They arrived there unnoticed, and in one house they surprised seven men and a woman, whom they brought to me, saying that though the road they had taken was bad and somewhat rough, it appeared to them very good in comparison with that over which we had come. I questioned the Indian prisoners to obtain information about the Christians whom I sought, and one of them, who was a native of Acalan, told me that he was a trader, having his principal trade in the town of Nito where those Spaniards lived, that there was a large traffic carried on there by merchants from all parts of the country, and that his own people of Acalan lived in a quarter of their own, having as their chief a brother of Apaspolon, the lord of Acalan. He said that the Christians had come there one night, captured the town, and robbed the inhabitants of all they had, besides much valuable merchandise belonging to traders from all parts who were in the town. In consequence of this, which had happened about the year before, the people had abandoned the place and gone to other provinces, while he

and certain other traders of Acalan had obtained permission from Acahuilguin, the lord of Acuculin, to settle in his country. Here he [Acahuilguin] had given them a small town in which they lived and whence they carried on their trade, although it was entirely ruined after the Spaniards had come there, for there was but that one road and nobody ventured to use it. He said he would guide me, but that we would be obliged to cross a large inlet of the sea and many difficult mountain chains, altogether a ten days' journey.

I rejoiced greatly at having found so good a guide, and treated him well, instructing the guides I had brought from Mazatlan and Taiza to tell him how well I had treated them, and that I was a great friend of Apaspolon, their lord. This increased his confidence in me, and I ventured to set him and all his companions free, trusting him to such an extent that I discharged the guides whom I had brought thus far, giving them some small presents for themselves and for their chiefs, and thanking them for their services; after which they left me well satisfied. I ordered four men from Acuculin and two chosen among the inhabitants of Tenciz to go ahead with a message from me to the lord of Acuculin, and encourage him to await me; and after them there followed other Indians to open the road. The scarcity of provisions and the want of rest, both for the men and horses, delayed me two days longer at that place, after which I departed, leading most of our horses until we reached a place where we passed the night. At daybreak we found that the man who was to have been our guide and all his companions had gone, and God knows how I regretted having dismissed the others. I marched ahead however, and slept in a forest, five leagues distant from there; and on the road we encountered such rough places that the only one of my horses which had held out was disabled by a fall and has not yet recovered.

The next day, I marched six leagues and crossed two rivers, one of which we crossed on a tree which had fallen spanning it; the horses swam across and two mares were drowned; we crossed the other river in canoes, the horses swimming. I slept in a small town of about fifteen newly built houses which I learned belonged to the merchants of Acalan who had left the town where the Christians were and had settled here. I waited there a day to collect the men and baggage, then I sent two companies of horsemen and one of foot soldiers in the direction of Acuculin; from there they wrote me that they had found the place deserted, but that in a large house, belonging to the lord of the country, they had captured two men who were waiting there, by command of their chief, to advise him of my arrival as soon as they saw me. The prisoners declared that their lord had heard of my coming from those messengers whom I had sent from Tenciz, and that he would rejoice to see me and come as soon as he learnt that I had arrived. My men sent one to summon the lord and to bring some provisions, while the other they held as hostage. They said they had found *cacao* but no maize, and that the pasture for the horses was fairly good.

When I reached Acuculin, I immediately asked whether the lord had arrived or the messenger returned, and they answered that they had not, so I spoke to the hostage and asked him why it was. He answered that he did not know unless the lord was awaiting to hear that I had arrived there, and that now he was aware of it he would come. I waited one day, and, as he did not come, I again spoke to the hostage; and he said that he did not know the reason, but that if I would give him some Spaniards he knew where his lord was and would go with them to call him. So ten Spaniards immediately left with him, and he led them a good five leagues through forests to some hamlets which they found empty, but

which, according to what the Spaniards said, had evidently been recently occupied; and that night the guide deserted them and they returned. Being left without any guide, which was cause enough to double our troubles, I sent squads of people, not only Spaniards, but also Indians, in all directions through the province, and they explored for eight consecutive days without meeting any living creature, save some women, who were of little use to our purpose, because neither did they know any road, nor could they give any account of the lord of the province. One of the women, however, said that she knew of a town, two days' journey from there, called Chianteco, where we would find people who could give us news of those Spaniards whom we sought; for many merchants lived in that town who traded everywhere. So I immediately sent people thither with this woman for a guide, and, although the town was two long days' journey from where we were, and accessible only by a rough and deserted road, the natives of it had already heard of my coming and no guide could be secured. Our Lord was pleased that, we being almost hopeless at finding ourselves without a guide, and unable to use the compass on account of being in the midst of forests so intricate, and with no other road discoverable which led anywhere save the one we had come on, should find in the forest a lad of about fifteen years of age, who, being questioned, said he would guide us as far as some hamlets of Taniha, which is another province I remembered I had to cross, and which he said was two days' journey from there. So I departed with this guide, and reached those hamlets within two days, finding that the scouts who had gone ahead had taken an old Indian there who guided them as far as the towns of Taniha, which are another two days' journey further on. Four Indians were captured in these towns, and, as soon as I inquired of them, they gave

News of the Spaniards at Nito

me news of the Spaniards whom I sought, saying they had seen them, and that they were two days' journey from there in the same town, which I remembered and which is called Nito.[1] This being a centre of much trade amongst the merchants was very well known everywhere, and I had heard about it already in the Province of Acalan, of which I have already spoken to Your Majesty. They also brought two women, natives of the said town Nito, who gave me further details; for they told me they were in the town when the Christians captured it, and that they themselves were among the prisoners taken when it was assaulted by night, and had served the Christians whom they called by their names.

I cannot express to Your Majesty the great joy which I and my people felt at the news these natives of Taniha gave us, for we saw ourselves at the end of our perilous journey. We had passed through innumerable troubles during the four days march from Acuculin, owing to the precipitous roads and rough mountainous passes we had to cross. During this time, the few horses we had left suffered falls, and my cousin, Juan de Avalon, rolled down a mountain with his horse and broke his arm[2]; and, had it not been for the steel plates of his armour which protected him from the stones, he would have been dashed to pieces; and we had trouble enough to get him up again. And there were many other misfortunes, too many to be recounted, which befell us, especially through famine; for, although we had brought from Mexico some swine, which were not as yet all consumed, neither I nor my men, when we arrived at Taniha, had tasted any bread for eight consecutive days; our only food was palmettos boiled with the meat and without

[1] Nito and Naco are sometimes confused, but they are distinct places: Nito is now called San Gil de Buena Vista, and the name of Naco remains to a valley near Puerto Caballos.

[2] A few pages back he describes his cousin's injuries as a broken leg—"in three or four places."

salt, and the cores of palm trees. Neither did we find any food in these towns of Taniha, for, being in the near neighbourhood of the Spaniards, they were deserted, although, had the natives known the miserable plight in which I afterwards found the Spaniards, they might have felt safe from being attacked by them. The news that we were so near to them made us forget all our past troubles and gave us courage to support our present ones, which were not less great; especially that of hunger, which was the worst of all, because even all those palmettos without salt were in insufficient quantity, since they had to be cut with such great difficulty from thick and tall palm trees that it took two men a day's hard work to cut what they could eat in an hour.

Those Indians who brought me news of the Spaniards told me that, before reaching Nito, I would have two days' march over a bad road, and that, near by, there was a large river which could be crossed only in canoes, for it was so wide, and the current so strong, that it would be impossible to swim. Upon hearing this, I sent fifteen Spaniards on foot in that direction, guided by one of those Indians, and ordered them to explore the roads and the river, and see if they could encounter any of those Spaniards, and discover to what group or party the settlers at Nito belonged, whether to those I had sent with Cristobal de Olid, or to those of Francisco de las Casas, or to those of Gil Gonzales de Avila. So they left, and the Indian guided them to the said river, where they took canoes from some traders and hid themselves there for two days, at the end of which time four Spaniards came in a canoe to fish. They seized them, not letting any escape, nor had the people of the town noticed the occurrence. When they were brought before me, I learned that the people there belonged to Gil Gonzales de Avila, and that they were all ill and almost starved to death, so I immediately despatched, in that same

canoe, two of my servants, to take a letter of mine to the Spaniards, announcing my arrival and my intention to cross that river by the ford, begging them to send me all the canoes and boats they could to help my crossing. I set out with all my people for the said ford of the river, reaching it in three days; and one Diego Nieto came there and told me that he had been condemned to exile. He brought me a boat and a canoe in which I embarked with ten or twelve of my people, and crossed that night to the town, though in great peril, for a strong wind struck us in the crossing and as the river is very broad just there at its mouth, we were in danger of being lost. It pleased our Lord to bring us safely across.

Cortes Arrives at Nito

The next day, I prepared another boat, which I found in the harbour, by means of which and some other canoes which I had tied securely two by two, I managed to bring over the whole of the people and horses within five or six days. The Spaniards whom I found there, some seventy men and twenty women, brought thither by Gil Gonzales de Avila, were in such a plight that it excited the greatest compassion merely to behold them, aside from seeing their rejoicing at my coming; for, of a truth, had I not arrived, everyone would have perished. For, besides being few, unarmed, and without horses, they were very ill, suffering from want and starvation, as their provisions from the island, and what they had captured from the natives when they took the town, were exhausted; they were in no condition to procure any more, for they were settled on a sort of tongue of land from which there was no issue, except by watre, as we afterwards discovered, and they had never penetrated half a league into the country from where they were. Seeing their great want, I determined to obtain some relief, until means could be provided for sending them back to the Islands, where they could recuperate, for amongst them all there were not eight fit to remain

in the country in case they were left there. I immediately sent some of my people, in five or six canoes and two barques which they had there, in various directions by sea to seek provisions.

The first expedition was to go to the mouth of a river, called Yasa, about two leagues from that settlement, and in the direction of the territory through which I had come; for I had learned that there were well provisioned towns thereabouts. Upon reaching the said river, they ascended it some leagues and arrived at some very considerable plantations; but the natives, seeing them approach, hastily concealed all their provisions in certain houses, and, carrying their women and children and goods and chattels, they all fled to the forest. When the Spaniards arrived at these houses, a pouring rain set in, so they all collected in a large house, and as they were wet through they all took off their armour, and many of them even their clothes to dry them and warm themselves; and, while in this condition, off their guard, the natives fell upon them, wounding most of them in such manner that they were forced to re-embark and to return to me without any provisions. God knows what I suffered, not only at seeing their wounds, some of which were dangerous, and because they had brought no relief for alleviating our wants, but also because those Indians would acquire more confidence at the sight of our misfortunes.

Immediately, in the same boats and canoes, I sent another and more numerous party of men, composed of Spaniards as well as Mexicans under command of one of my captains. I ordered them to cross to the other side of that great river and to follow along the coast while the barques and canoes were to go from one point to another of the land, accompanying them so as to enable them to cross the bays and rivers which were many. So they set out, and came to the mouth of the said river

where the other Spaniards had been wounded; but they returned having done nothing, and bringing no supplies of provisions except that they captured four Indians in a canoe at sea. Being asked how it was they came back thus, they said that the great rains had swollen the river to a raging torrent, and they could not ascend it more than a league; but, believing it would subside, they had waited eight days without fire or any provisions except such fruits as the forest yielded; some of them were in such a condition that they hardly survived. I found myself so concerned and perplexed that, had it not been for the swine left over from the journey, which we ate with great relish without either bread or salt, we would have all perished from hunger. Through the interpreter, I asked those Indians who had been taken in the canoe, whether they knew of any place in the neighbourhood where we might procure food, promising them that, if they would guide me, I would release them and give them many presents besides. One of them said that he was a trader and the others were his slaves, and that he had gone frequently with his merchant ships and knew all the bay, which extended from there to a large river, in which all the traders like himself took refuge in time of storm, and that, on that river, there were many large towns which were rich and well stocked with provisions where we could find everything we required, and that he would guide us thither. He offered, in proof of his truth, that I might put him in chains and if he had lied I might punish him as he deserved. So I ordered the boats and canoes to be prepared, and, having manned them with all who were still healthy and capable of bearing fatigue, I sent them under the guidance of that man; but ten days later they returned as they had gone, saying that the guide had led them into marshes where neither the barques nor canoes could float, and that, in spite of their efforts, they had never been able to cross.

I asked the guide why he had hoaxed me thus, and he answered that he had not done so, but that the Spaniards whom I had sent with him refused to go on though they had been close to the spot where the river joined the sea; and indeed many of the Spaniards even admitted that they had heard the sound of the sea very distinctly, so they could not have been very far from it.

I cannot express what I felt at seeing myself so beyond help, and almost beyond hope, faced with the fear that none of us would escape death by starvation. God, our Lord, Who always relieves necessities, even those of one so unworthy as I, and Who has so often delivered me in such because I am in the royal service of Your Majesty guided thither a ship which was coming from the Islands, with no idea of finding me, and which carried some thirty men, besides the crew and thirteen horses, seventy odd swine, twelve casks of salt meat and thirty loads of bread, of the kind used in the Islands. We all gave thanks to our Lord, Who had rescued us in our great necessity; and I bought all those provisions of the ship for the price of four thousand *pesos*. I had already worked at repairing a caravel which the Spaniards there had allowed to go almost to pieces, and had begun building a brigantine from pieces of other vessels which had been wrecked thereabouts, so that, when this ship arrived, the caravel was already repaired; though I believe we would never have finished the brigantine had that ship not come, because it brought us a man who, though not really a ship's carpenter, was yet sufficiently versed in that trade.

Conditions at Nito

In scouring the country, a path was discovered leading through some rough mountains to a certain town, called Leguela, eighteen leagues from there, where plenty of provisions were found, though, owing to the bad road, it was impossible to avail ourselves of them.

Some Indians captured there told us that the place

where Francisco de las Casas, Cristobal de Olid, and Gil Gonzalez de Avila had left, and where Christobal de Olid had died, as I have already informed Your Majesty, and will again hereafter speak of, was a town called Naco. This agreed with the information given by the Spaniards I had found at Nito, so I immediately ordered a road to be opened, and sent ahead all my men, foot soldiers and horsemen, under one of my captains, keeping with me only the servants of my household, the sick, and those who wished to remain and go by sea. I instructed that captain to go to the said town of Naco, and try to pacify the people of that province who were still somewhat disturbed in consequence of the presence of those Spaniards; and that as soon as he arrived he should send ten or twelve horsemen, with as many crossbowmen, to the bay of San Andres,[1] about twenty leagues distant from there. Meanwhile I would bring the sick and wounded and the rest of the people by sea, and wait for them if I arrived first; if, on the contrary, they arrived first, they should wait for me.

After their departure and the completion of the brigantine, I thought to embark with the rest of my people, but I discovered that, although we had salt meat enough, we had not sufficient bread; and it seemed a very risky thing to put to sea without this, having so many sick people on board, for, if we encountered bad weather which would delay us, we should be exposed to death by starvation instead of finding relief for our woes. While considering how to remedy this, one who had been left as captain of those people told me that, when they had first come there with Gil Gonzalez, they had brought a very good brigantine and four ships; and that with the ships' boats they had ascended that river and found two large gulfs of fresh water, on whose shores there were several villages well stocked with food. After they had

[1] San Andres is now called Puerto Caballos.

navigated to the extreme end of them, a distance altogether of fourteen leagues up the river, the stream became so narrow and so impetuous that, in six days, they had not made more than four leagues, although the waters were still very deep. They had not been able to discover much about it, but he believed that we would there find sufficient provisions of maize. He thought I had too few people to go thither, for eighty of his party had landed, and, although they had succeeded in surprising the town, the Indians gathered afterwards and fought with them, wounding several people and forcing them to re-embark.

Seeing, however, the extremity in which we were, and that it was more dangerous to go to sea without provisions than to hunt for them on land, I determined to ascend that river; for, besides having no alternative, it might be that God, our Lord, would grant that I should there discover some secret profitable to Your Majesty. So I immediately counted the people capable of accompanying me, and found some forty Spaniards who, though not all fit for service, were still able to guard the ships while I landed. With these forty Spaniards and about fifty Indians who still remained of those whom I brought from Mexico, and everything being ready for sea, I set out, in two other boats and four canoes, in the direction of that river we were to ascend, leaving all my sick people in that town with a steward of mine to take charge of them. At first, we had great difficulty in navigating against the strong current of the river, but after two nights and a day we reached the first of the two rivers above mentioned, some three leagues distant from our starting place; the gulf may measure about twelve leagues around, its shores being completely deserted, very low, and swampy. I sailed an entire day about this gulf, until I came to another narrowing which the river makes; and, entering it, I reached the

other gulf the next morning. It was certainly the most beautiful thing in the world to behold, for, in the midst of the rockiest and most rugged mountain chain, there existed a sea of over thirty leagues in extent. I followed along the shore until towards nightfall we perceived a village, and, landing, we found an entrance to it about two thirds of a league distant; but it appeared I had been perceived, for the place was entirely deserted and empty. In the neighbouring fields we found a great abundance of green maize which we ate that night and the next morning; but, as we did not find what we came for, we took a supply of that green maize and returned to our boats, without having seen any natives of the country.

In crossing to the other side of the gulf, which was accomplished with great difficulty on account of a contrary wind we encountered, one canoe was lost, but its crew were saved by a barque, so that only one Indian was drowned. It was late in the evening when we reached the shore, so we could not land until the next morning, when we ascended a small stream with the barques and canoes, leaving the brigantine outside. Thus I reached the place where there seemed to be a trail, and, having ordered the boats and canoes to return to the brigantine on the gulf, I landed with thirty of my men and all the Indians; and, following the trail, I reached a village about a quarter of a league distant which seemed to have been abandoned by its inhabitants many days before, for the houses were choked with weeds, although there were many fine orchards of *cacao* and other fruit trees in the neighbourhood; I explored the town to see if there was a road leading anywhere, and finally found one, so overgrown that apparently it had not been used for some time. As I found no other I followed it, and marched that day some five leagues over mountains so rugged that we had to scramble over them with both hands and

feet. We came to some maize plantations, with a house in the midst of them, where we captured three women and a man, who were doubtless the owners of these plantations. They guided us to other plantations, where we took two more women, who, in turn, led us by a road to a very large plantation, in the midst of which stood forty very small huts which seemed to have been recently built. It would appear, however, that our arrival was known, for the village was deserted and all the people had fled to the mountains; but, as we came upon them so suddenly, they could not carry off their provisions, so they had to leave us something, especially fowls, partridges, pigeons, and pheasants, which they kept in cages; there was, however, no dried maize, and no salt. I passed the night there, and the fowls and some green maize which we found somewhat assuaged our hunger.

We had been there more than two hours when two of its inhabitants came, very much surprised to find such guests in their houses; they were captured by my scouts, and, on being asked if they knew of any town near there, they answered yes, and that they would guide me to it the next day but that we could arrive only very late, almost at night. The next morning, therefore, we began our march, guided by these two Indians, over roads still worse than those of the day before; for, besides being quite as overgrown with brushwood, we had at almost every arrow's shot to cross one of the many rivers which empty into that gulf. It is owing to the great accumulation of waters coming down from the mountains that these gulfs and lagoons are formed and that the river flows with such rapidity at its mouth, as I have told Your Majesty. Following our road in this wise, we travelled seven leagues without seeing any inhabited places, during which distance we crossed forty-five large rivers, not counting many creeks. On the road we captured three women, who were coming with loads of maize from that

town to which the guide was taking us, who assured us that the guide spoke the truth.

At about sunset, we distinguished a noise as of people, and, asking those women what it meant, they answered that a certain festival was being celebrated that day. I concealed all my people in the forest in the most perfect manner possible, and placed some scouts quite close to the town, and others on the road, to capture any Indians who might be passing; and thus we passed the night in a great downpour of rain and amid the greatest pest of mosquitoes imaginable. Such was the condition of the forest and the road, and so dark and tempestuous was the night that, two or three times when I attempted to reach the town, I failed to discover the way, although we were so near that we could almost hear the people talking to one another; thus we were forced to wait for daylight, when we fell upon them so opportunely that we found them all asleep. I had given orders that nobody should enter a house or utter a cry, but that we should surround the principal houses, especially that of the chief, and a large barracks in which the guide said all the warriors slept. Our good fortune willed it that the first house to which we came was that in which the warriors were gathered. It was already daylight, so that everything could be seen, and one of my men, seeing so many people in arms, and considering how few in number we were to attack such numerous opponents, even though they were asleep, began to cry for help, and to shout, "Santiago! Santiago!" which awakened the Indians. Some of them seized their weapons, and others did not, but, the houses having no walls, their roofs being supported merely by wooden posts, most of the Indians fled in every direction as soon as we entered the place, for it was too large to be entirely surrounded. I assure Your Majesty that had that man not shouted everyone of them would have been captured and it would have turned

out the most beautiful undertaking ever seen in these parts, and might have brought about their complete pacification; for, by setting them free again, and explaining the reason of my coming, and reassuring them, they would have seen how well they were treated and thus good results would have been produced; whereas exactly the contrary happened. We captured about fifteen men and twenty women, and some ten or twelve other men perished in resisting capture, among whom was their chief, who had not been recognised until afterwards when the prisoners showed me his dead body. Neither in this town did we find anything to supply our wants, for, although there was plenty of green maize in the fields, it was not the kind of food for which we came to search. I remained in this town two days to rest my people.

Having asked the Indians who were captured there whether they knew of any other town in the vicinity where dried maize could be found, they said they knew a town, called Chacujal, which was a large and ancient one, where all kinds of provisions would be found in abundance, so I departed, guided by these Indians towards the town they mentioned; and, having marched six long leagues of bad road that day, crossing many a river, I reached some large plantations which the guides told me belonged to the towns whither we were going. For about two leagues through the forest near them, we advanced so as not to be seen, and my scouts, whom I always sent ahead of me, captured eight wood-cutters and other labourers who were coming unsuspectingly through the forest towards me. About sunset, the guides told me to halt, as we were already very near the town; so I stopped in the forest till the third hour of the night. Then I again began to march, coming to a river, which we crossed in water, breast high, and so swift that the crossing was sufficiently dangerous, and only by holding one another hand in hand did we cross without losing

anyone. The guides then explained that the village was near by, so I ordered my men to halt and went myself with two companies close enough to see the houses and even to hear the people talking; they all seemed quite tranquil, and we had evidently not been detected. I returned to my people, and made them take some rest, putting six men on watch in sight of the town on each side of the road; but when I had lain down on some straw to rest, one of my scouts whom I had left came and told me that many armed people were coming along the road, talking together and evidently unaware of our presence. I, therefore, ordered my people to form as quickly as they could; but, as the distance between the village and our camp was so short, the Indians discovered the scouts, and, as soon as they perceived them, they let fly a volley of arrows and then retreated towards the town, fighting until we entered, when it was so dark they disappeared immediately amongst the streets. Fearing an ambush, I did not allow my people to disband, but, keeping them well together, I marched to a great square where there were mosques and oratories, built in the same manner and surrounded by buildings of the same kind, and in the same fashion as those of Culua; our fears were here increased because, since leaving Acalan, we had seen nothing of the kind. There were even some who expressed the opinion that we ought to return and cross the river that same night before the people of the town, perceiving we were so few, should cut off our retreat. And, truly, this advice was not bad in view of what we had already seen of the place, and what we had reason to fear; thus we remained gathered in that great square for a long time, without hearing any sound of the people. It seemed to me we ought not to leave that town in such manner, for this reason, that, perhaps, the Indians seeing we remained would be more frightened than if they saw us leave in that way; for, if we retreated,

the enemy would the sooner perceive our weakness, which would augment our danger.

It pleased our Lord that it should happen thus, for, after remaining a long time in that square, I entered with my people into one of those large halls, and sent others out into the town to report if they saw anyone. They never encountered anyone, but, on the contrary, they entered many houses and found the fires still burning, and a large stock of provisions, which pleased them greatly; so we remained there that night with every possible precaution. At daybreak, we explored the whole town, which was well laid out, the houses being very well built, and close together. We found a great deal of cotton in them, some woven, and some ready for weaving, also clothing, and a large quantity of dried maize, *cacao*, beans, pepper, and salt, besides many fowls and pheasants in cages, partridges, and dogs of the species they raise to eat (and which are exceedingly good); and every other variety of provisions to such an extent that, had we had the ships where we could load them, I would have regarded myself as well provided for many a day. But to avail ourselves of them we would have had to carry them on men's backs twenty leagues, while we were in such a condition that we had enough to do to carry ourselves back to the ships without taking other loads, for, had we not rested there for some days, we should have been unable to return to our boats.

The next day, I sent for a native of the place who had been captured near the plantations, and who seemed a person of importance, for he had his bow and arrows for hunting, and was well dressed, according to their fashion. I spoke to him through an interpreter I had, telling him to go to the chief and his people and say to them that I had not come to do them any harm, but rather to tell them some things which were expedient for them to know, and to say that the chief or some other

honourable person should come and learn the cause of my arrival, for they might be sure that much good would result to them; on the contrary if they refused they might suffer for it. Thus I despatched him with a letter of mine to the chief, for the people of those parts were always more assured by seeing my letters. I did this against the advice of some of my men, who said it was unwise to send him, for he would explain to them how few we were; that the village was large and populous, judging from the number of houses closely built together, and that the inhabitants, seeing how few we were, might easily call on their neighbours for help and attack us. I saw they were right, yet wished to find the means of sufficiently provisioning my company, and believing that, if those people came to me peaceably, they might perhaps furnish means for carrying away some of the provisions, I set aside their arguments; because in truth no less danger waited us from starvation if we lived without provisions, than there did in an attack from the Indians. I, therefore, despatched the Indian, who promised to return the next day, as he knew where the chief and all the people were. On the day appointed for the Indian's return, two of my Spaniards who were exploring about the town and country found my letter placed on a pole by the roadside, from which we judged we would have no answer; and thus it happened, for neither the Indian nor anybody else came, so we remained eighteen days there, resting, and seeking to devise some means for carrying away those provisions.

While pondering this it seemed to me that, by following down the river, I might perhaps come to the other large river that empties into the gulf of fresh water where I had left my brigantine as well as my boats and canoes; so I asked those Indians whom I held prisoners if this was true, and they answered yes, though we could not understand them very well, nor they us, for they spoke

a different language from any we had yet heard.[1] By signs, however, and with some words which I understood of that language, I prayed that two of them would guide ten Spaniards to the junction of that river with the other; and they answered that it was very near, so that they could go and return the same day. And God was pleased that, having travelled about two leagues through some very beautiful orchards of *cacao* and other fruit trees, they came upon a large river which they said emptied into the gulf where I had left the brigantines and barques and canoes, saying that the river's name was Apolochic.

Building the Rafts

Having been asked how long the journey would take in canoes to the gulf they replied five days, so I immediately sent two Spaniards with one of those guides who offered to take them, by short cuts known to him, to where the brigantines lay. I ordered that the brigantines and barques and canoes be brought to the mouth of that large river, and that, leaving the vessel behind, the two Spaniards should try, with one canoe and a boat, to ascend the river to its junction with the other. Having despatched these men, I ordered four rafts to be constructed of logs and large bamboos, capable of carrying forty bushels of dried maize and ten men, not counting many other things such as beans, and red peppers, and *cacao*, which each Spaniard took besides. It took eight full days to construct the rafts. When they were loaded, the Spaniard I had sent to the brigantines returned, and told me that, after ascending the river for six consecutive days, they had found it impossible to fetch the barque up, and

[1] The multitude and variety of American languages prove the high antiquity of the different peoples, for long centuries must have been required to evolve such diversity, especially where there was no written language. Humboldt enumerates fifteen different idioms, as absolutely distinct from one another as Persian from German, or French from Polish. Brasseur de Bourbourg estimates the total number, including dialects, at about two hundred.

had therefore left it with a guard of ten Spaniards and finished their journey in the canoe; they arrived at a place about one league lower down the river, where exhausted from rowing they had left it hidden. On their way up the river they had been attacked by some few Indians and had fought sometimes with them; these, they thought, however, would gather forces to await their return. I immediately sent people to bring up the canoe to where the rafts were, and, having loaded all the provisions we had gathered onto the rafts, I selected the necessary people to man them, who were supplied with long poles to protect them from floating logs, which made the river rather dangerous. I sent the remainder of my people under a captain to return by the same road on which we had come, with orders to await me where we had first disembarked if they arrived there before me, for I would go thither to meet them; and if I arrived first I would wait for them. I embarked in a canoe with the only two crossbowmen left.

Though the journey I was undertaking was extremely dangerous, owing to the rapid current and to the approximate certainty that the Indians would waylay us on our passage, I, nevertheless, determined to go that way, the better to preserve order; and, recommending myself to God, I began the descent of the river, which was accomplished with such rapidity that, in three hours, we came to where the barque had been left.

Here we thought to lighten the rafts by transferring some of the cargo onto it, but so rapid was the current that they could not stop. I went on board the barque, and ordered that the canoe, well-manned, should go ahead of the rafts, to see whether any Indians were in ambush, and to discover any dangerous places there might be. I myself remained behind in the barque ready to help the rafts if need should be, for I could more easily be of assistance from the rear than from the front.

About sunset, one of the rafts was somewhat shattered by striking a submerged log, though it was floated again by the fury of the water after half its cargo had been lost. Three hours after nightfall, I heard the shouts of Indians ahead of us, but, not wishing to leave the rafts behind, I did not go ahead to see what it meant, and, after a little, it ceased, and we heard nothing more for a while. A little later I heard it again, and it seemed to me nearer, but it ceased, and I could not ascertain what it was, as the canoe and the three rafts went ahead and I followed behind with the damaged raft, which could not travel so fast. For quite a while then no more shouts were heard, so we proceeded somewhat off our guard while I took off my helmet, for I had a high fever, and rested my head on my hands. Continuing thus, the violence of the current at the bend of the river struck us with such force that the barque and rafts were driven on the bank. It then transpired that the shouts we had heard had come from this point, for the Indians who inhabited its banks knew the river well, and foresaw that the force of the current would throw us on land at that point; so, many of them awaited us there, and, as soon as the canoe and rafts which had gone ahead reached that spot where we arrived later, they were assaulted by a volley of arrows which wounded almost everyone of their crews though knowing that most of us still remained behind, the attack of the Indians was not so furious as that which they afterwards made upon us. The people in the canoe were prevented by the strong current from coming back to warn us, so, when we were thrown on land, the Indians raised a great yell and let fly such a volley of arrows and stones that we were all of us wounded, I in the head which was the only part not protected by my mail. Our Lord permitted this to happen by a high bluff where the waters were very deep, and to this circumstance we owed our escape; for, the night being very

dark, some of the Indians fell into the water, and I believe many were drowned. The current soon whirled us quickly away, and very shortly after we could hardly hear their shouts. The rest of the night passed without any further encounter, though now and then we heard faint cries from the distance, or from the bluffs of the river. The banks of the river are lined with beautiful plantations.

At daybreak, we found ourselves about five leagues from the mouth of the river, where it flows into the gulf; the brigantine was waiting for us there at the gulf, and we arrived about noon, so that in one day and one night we covered twenty long leagues in descending that river. Wishing to transfer the provisions from the rafts to the brigantine, I found that everything had been wet, and seeing that, were it not dried, all would be spoiled and our labour lost, I had the dry separated from the wet and placed in the brigantine, while the rest I placed in the barque and the canoes and sent it as quickly as possible to the town where it might be dried; for, on account of the swamps about that gulf, there was no place there where this could be done. Thus they left, and I ordered the canoes and barques to return immediately to help me transport the people, as the brigantine and one canoe which remained were insufficient to carry them all.

After the barques and canoes had left, I set sail, and went to the place where my people who had gone overland were to meet me; and there I waited for them three days, at the end of which time they arrived in very good condition, except for one Spaniard, who, they said, had eaten certain herbs on the road and died instantly. They brought with them an Indian whom they had captured in that town where I had left them; he was going about unguardedly, and, as he was different from the natives of the country not only in language but also in dress, I

began to question him by signs, when another was found among the prisoners who said he could understand him; and he told me that he was a native of Teculutlan. As soon as I heard this name, it seemed to me I had heard it mentioned before, so, when I reached the town, I searched amongst my memoranda and found that name as belonging to a place somewhere across the country, a distance altogether of seventy-eight leagues from the Spanish settlement on the South Sea governed by Pedro de Alvarado, one of my captains; it also appeared from the memoranda that some of Pedro de Alvarado's men had been in that town of Teculutlan, which indeed this Indian confirmed; and this news pleased me very much.

All the people being collected, and the boats not having yet returned, we consumed the small quantity of provisions which had been kept dry, and embarked on board the brigantine, though the vessel was so small that there was hardly room for us all. The intention was to cross the gulf to the town where we had first landed, and where we had seen the ripening maize fields. More than twenty-five days having passed, we reasonably expected to find it ripe enough for our use, and so it was; for, one morning, we saw boats and canoes coming towards us in the middle of the gulf, and, continuing altogether in that direction, we reached land. Immediately after landing, all my people, Spaniards as well as Indians, besides forty native prisoners, went straight to the town, where they found excellent maize fields, the greater part fully ripe. Meeting no opposition, both Christians and Indians made three journeys to and fro that day, for the distance was short, carrying loads of grain, so that the brigantine being filled, as well as the boats, I went to the town myself, leaving them engaged in transporting the maize. I at once sent the two barques, another which had arrived there with a ship which had been lost on the coast coming to New Spain, and four canoes, to gather this great har-

vest, which was a most providential supply, repaying the labour it cost; for, had it not been found, we would have all inevitably perished by starvation.

I had all those provisions loaded on the ships, and embarked with all the people in that town who belonged to Gil Gonzalez, besides those who remained of my people; and this being done I set sail on the [passage missing in MS.] day of [passage missing in MS.], and steered to the port on the bay of San Andres. Having first landed all those who were able to walk and two horses I had with me on the ship, I ordered them to go to the said harbour and bay where they would find, or wait for, the people who were to come from Naco, for that road had been already travelled. The ships were dangerously overcrowded, so I sent a barque along the coast to enable them to cross certain rivers on their road; and, when I reached the said port, I found that the people from Naco had arrived there two days before me. I learned from them that all the others were well, and had a great store of maize and red peppers and many fruits of the country, though they had neither meat nor salt, as for two months they had not known what those things were.

I remained twenty days in this port, striving to establish some order amongst those people in Naco, and looking for a convenient place to found a settlement; for that port is certainly the best which exists along the discovered coast of all this mainland, that is to say from the Gulf of Pearls to Florida. God willed that I should find a very good one, suitable for my purpose, for, after I had sent to explore some streams one or two leagues from the site of this town, good samples of gold were found; and, both on this account, and also because the port was so beautiful and had such an excellent, well-populated neighbourhood, it seemed to me that it would be for Your Majesty's good service to found a settlement here; I therefore sent a messenger to Naco

Foundation of Natividad

where the people were, to learn if any of them would like to settle there. The land being good, about fifty of them, mostly of those who had come thither with me, consented, and thus, in Your Majesty's name, I founded there a town, which on account of the day of its foundation, being the Nativity of Our Lady, I named Natividad de Nuestra Señora. I appointed alcaldes and municipal officers, leaving them a priest, church ornaments, and everything necessary for the celebration of mass; I also left them workmen and mechanics, such as a smith, with a very good forge, and his necessary tools, a carpenter, a shipwright, a barber, and a tailor. Among the settlers there were twenty horsemen and some crossbowmen. Finally I provided certain artillery and powder.

When I arrived at that town, and heard from the Spaniards from Naco that the natives of that and the neighbouring towns were all in a commotion, and had fled from their dwellings to the forests, refusing to return, although frequently invited to do so, for they remembered their injuries at the hands of Gil Gonzales, Cristobal de Olid, and their men, I wrote to the captain there to endeavour by all means to secure some of those Indians and send them to me that I might speak to them and calm them. He did this, and sent me certain persons whom he had captured in a foray he had made for the purpose. I spoke to them, and reassured them, and made some of the principal persons from Mexico who were with me speak also with them. These latter told them who I was, and of what I had done in their country, and of the good treatment all had received from me after they became my friends, and of how they had been protected and maintained in justice, they and their property, their wives and children; they told of the punishment which those who rebelled against the service of Your Majesty received, and of many other things which tended to pacify the captured Indians. Nevertheless, they still

said they were afraid that what they had been told was not the truth, because those captains who had been there before had said the same thing and afterwards they had discovered it was all a lie; for the women whom they had given them to make their bread had been kept, as well as the men who carried their baggage, and they feared I would do the same. Still they were reassured by what the Mexicans and my interpreter told them, and by observing that they were all well treated and happy in our company, so they grew a little more confident. I sent them to speak to the chiefs and people of the towns, and, a few days later, the captain wrote me that some of the neighbouring towns had come peaceably, especially the chief ones, which are Naco, where they are stationed, Quimiotlan, Suli, and Tholomi, the smallest of which numbered more than two thousand households, besides other villages depending on them; they had said that they would later all peaceably return to their homes, for messengers had been sent to reassure them, and let them know of my arrival and of all I had told them, and what they had learned from the natives of Mexico. They also greatly desired I should visit them, for the people would be more reassured by my presence. This I would willingly have done had I not been obliged to go on and re-establish order elsewhere, concerning which I will relate to Your Majesty in the following chapter.

News from the Colony of Honduras

Upon my arrival, Invincible Cæsar, at that town of Nito, where I found the lost people of Gil Gonzalez, I learnt from them that Francisco de las Casas, one of my lieutenants, whom I had sent to inquire about Cristobal de Olid and his men, as I have already related to Your Majesty, had left certain Spaniards down the coast at a port which the pilots called Las Honduras; these Spaniards no doubt were still there. As soon as I reached that town and bay of San Andres, where, in Your Majesty's

name, I established a town called Natividad de Nuestra Señora, I delayed there to organise the settlement of it, and likewise to give orders to the captain and people in Naco concerning the measures they should take for the pacification and security of those other towns. I sent the ship I had bought to the said port of Honduras to inquire after those other people, and bring me information. By the time the above mentioned orders were executed, the ship returned, bringing the procurator of the town and an officer of the Municipal Council, who besought me earnestly to go there and relieve them, because they were in extreme need. The captain appointed by Francisco de las Casas and a judge whom he had likewise nominated, had rebelled and taken possession of a ship, then in the harbour, and had persuaded fifty out of the hundred and ten colonists to follow them, leaving the others without weapons or iron tools of any sort; taking away also almost everything they owned; so that they were in great fear either that the Indians would kill them, or that they would starve to death, for they were unable to procure provisions. A vessel from the island of Española, owned by a man called the Bachelor Francisco Moreno, had since arrived there; but, though they had besought him to provide them with necessaries he had refused, as I would more fully learn when I came to that town. To correct all this, I embarked in my ships, with all my suffering people (some of whom had meanwhile died), it being my intention to send them from that place to the Islands and to New Spain, as I afterwards did. I took with me some of my own household servants, and gave orders that twenty horsemen and ten crossbowmen should go overland, as I heard that the road to the village was good, although they would have to cross some rivers.

It took me nine days to arrive, owing to unfavourable weather, and, having cast anchor in the port of Honduras,

I entered a boat with two Franciscan friars, whom I always took with me, and about ten servants of mine; and thus we went on land where the people of the town were in the square awaiting me. As I neared shore, they all rushed into the sea and lifting me out of the boat they carried me to the town and church with every demonstration of welcome. After having given thanks to our Lord, they prayed me to stop and hear their account of all that had transpired, for they feared that in consequence of misrepresentations which might have been made to me, I might be vexed with them, and they wished me to know the truth before I judged them. I assented to this and their priest rose and spoke to me as follows:—

History of Olid's rebellion

Sir, you know how all, or almost all, of us who are here, were sent from New Spain under your captain Cristobal de Olid to settle and populate this country in the name of His Majesty, and that you ordered us to obey the commands of the said Cristobal de Olid as though they were your own. Thus, we left for the island of Cuba, where we were to take in some provisions and horses that were still requisite; and, having arrived at Havana, which is a port of the said island, he exchanged letters with Diego Velasquez and His Majesty's officers residing there, who sent him some more people. After we were provisioned with what we required, all of which was provided through your agent, Alonzo de Contreros, we left the island and continued our voyage.

Omitting some incidents of our voyage, too tedious to be related, we landed on this coast, fourteen leagues below the port of Caballos, where the said captain Cristobal de Olid took possession for your worship, and in the name of His Majesty, establishing a town with its alcaldes and municipal officers, who had already been nominated at the outset. He executed certain official acts regarding the possession and laying out of the town, acting in the name of your worship and as your captain and lieutenant. Some days later, how-

ever, he made common cause with those servants of Diego Velasquez, who had come with him, and went through certain formalities which made it clear that he had renounced obedience to your worship; although most of us disapproved of this, we did not dare to oppose him because he threatened us with the gallows, but, on the contrary, we consented to all he did, the more so as certain servants and relatives of your worship did the same, for neither did they dare to act otherwise. This being accomplished, and, having heard from six messengers whom he caused to be imprisoned, that certain people of Gil Gonzalez de Avila were coming down upon him, he stationed himself near the ford of a river where they had to cross, so as to capture them.

After waiting some days in vain, he left there a lieutenant with some force, and returned to this town, where he began to fit out two caravels, and to provide them with artillery and ammunition, intending to attack the settlement of Spaniards, which the said Gil Gonzalez had founded higher up the coast. While thus engaged, Francisco de las Casas arrived with two ships, and, as soon as Cristobal de Olid knew that it was he, he ordered the artillery on his ships to fire on him, in spite of the fact that Francisco de las Casas hoisted flags of peace, and shouted the information that his ships belonged to your worship. The artillery, however, continued to play under his orders, and, after the ships had anchored, he still fired ten or twelve shots, one of which went through one of the vessels and came out on the other side. When Francisco de las Casas perceived his intentions to be hostile, the suspicions he already entertained against Olid were confirmed, and he saw he could not temporise with such an enemy; so he manned his boats and began to use his artillery, taking possession of those two vessels that were in the port as their crews had deserted them and gone ashore. After these ships were taken, Cristobal de Olid began to sue for terms, not, however, with the intention of observing them, but to temporise until the men he had sent against Gil Gonzalez de Avila should return, for he did not feel himself strong enough to cope with Las Casas; he, therefore, sought to deceive him, and Las Casas allowed himself

to be hood-winked. During these inconclusive negotiations a great tempest suddenly arose at sea, and, as there was no proper anchorage, but only an unsheltered coast, the ship on board of which Francisco de las Casas was, was dashed on shore, thirty odd men being drowned, and almost everything they had being lost. Las Casas and the others escaped naked and so bruised by the waves that they could not keep their feet, so Cristobal de Olid took them all prisoners; and, before they entered the town, he made them swear on the Holy Gospels that they would obey him and regard him as their captain ever afterwards, doing nothing against his will.

Just then the news came that his lieutenant had captured fifty-seven men and an alcalde mayor of Gil Gonzalez de Avila, and had afterwards set them free again, allowing them to go one way while he with his men took another. Rendered furious by hearing that his orders had not been obeyed, Cristobal de Olid left for Naco, where he had formerly been, taking with him Francisco de las Casas and some of his men, and leaving the other prisoners under guard of a lieutenant and an alcalde. Las Casas, in the presence of all, entreated him to allow him to return to your worship, and give an account of what had happened; for otherwise he must keep him under strict guard and not trust him, as he would do his best to escape. Some days later, Cristobal de Olid learned that Gil Gonzalez and a few of his men had settled at the port called Tholoma, so he sent certain people thither, who attacked Gonzalez by night and captured him as well as those who were with him, bringing them prisoners. Thus both these captains were kept there many days, Cristobal de Olid refusing to set them free, although he was begged many times to do so. He also made all the people of Gil Gonzalez swear to obey him as their captain, just as he had already done with those of Francisco de las Casas.

Execution of Cristobal de Olid

Many times, after the imprisonment of Gil Gonzalez, did Francisco de las Casas beg him in everybody's presence, to set him and his companions at liberty, saying that otherwise he had better be on his guard for they would kill him; but he would never consent to do so, until his tyranny had gone so far that one night, when they

were all together in a hall, and many other people were with them discussing certain matters, Francisco de las Casas seized him by the beard and having no other arms, he stabbed him with a penknife with which he had been cutting his nails while walking up and down, crying at the same time, "The time is already passed for suffering this tyranny!" Gil Gonzalez and others of your worship's servants joined with him and disarmed the body-guard, and, in the scuffle which ensued, Cristobal de Olid, the captain and ensign of his body guard, his field-officer, and others, were wounded, taken prisoners, and disarmed, though none were killed. In the midst of the confusion, Cristobal de Olid escaped and hid himself, while the captains, within two hours, pacified the people and secured the persons of his principal adherents; and they proclaimed by the public crier that, whoever knew where Cristobal de Olid was hidden, should declare it immediately under penalty of death. They quickly learnt where he was, and captured him, placing him under good guard; and on the next morning, after giving him his trial, the captains agreed in sentencing him to death. This was executed on his person by cutting off his head, to the great satisfaction of the people who were thus liberated.

It was then proclaimed by the public crier that all who wished to settle in this country should say so, and that those who wished to leave should do likewise; one hundred and ten men said they desired to settle, and the others said they would go with Francisco de las Casas and Gil Gonzalez who were about to return to your worship. Among these former, there were twenty horsemen to which number I and all those here present belonged. Francisco de las Casas provided us with everything we needed, appointed a captain over us, and directed us to come to this coast and colonise for your worship, in the name of His Majesty; and he nominated sheriffs, municipal officers, a notary public, a procurator of the town council, and an alguacil, ordering us to call the town Trujillo; he promised us and pledged his faith as a gentleman, that he would procure from your worship more people and arms and horses for the pacification of the country. He, moreover, left us two interpreters, an Indian woman and a Christian, who understood very well the languages hereabouts. Thus,

we took leave of him and came here as he had ordered us to do; and to inform your worship the more quickly, he despatched the brigantine so that assistance might reach us the sooner.

Having arrived at the port of San Andres, also called Caballos, we found there a caravel which had recently come from the Islands; and, as that port did not seem to us the proper place for a settlement, and as we had heard about this one, we loaded all our heavy baggage on to that caravel and embarked, taking with us the captain and forty men, while the horsemen and others remained on land, keeping nothing but the clothes on our backs, so as to be freer and unencumbered in case of accident on our march. The captain gave his full powers to one of the alcaldes, who is now here present, whom he ordered us to obey during his absence; the other municipal officers went with him in the caravel. Thus we parted from each other to meet again in this port, and, during our march, we had some encounters with the natives who killed two Spaniards and some of the Indians whom we had brought for our service.

Upon arriving in a dreadful plight at this port, the horses unshod, but all of us happy in the expectation of finding the captain with our baggage and arms, we were more than afflicted to find nothing at all, while we were ourselves almost stark naked, destitute of arms and iron tools, all of which the captain had taken in the caravel. We were perplexed and knew not what to do with ourselves, until, after consulting together, we decided to wait for the relief which was to come from your worship, about which we entertained no doubts. So we immediately set about founding our town and took possession of the country for your worship, in the name of His Majesty, as your worship may see from the official acts drawn up before the notary public of the municipal council.

Five or six days later, a caravel appeared at sea, about two leagues from this place, and the alguacil immediately went in a canoe to discover what caravel it was; and he brought us news that it belonged to the bachelor in law, Pedro Moreno, a resident of Española, who came by the order of the judges residing in that island, for the purpose

of inquiring into certain matters between Cristobal de Olid and Gil Gonzalez. He brought a full stock of provisions and arms which belonged to His Majesty; and we all rejoiced greatly at this news, giving thanks to our Lord, and believing that our necessities would be relieved. The municipal officers and some of the householders immediately went and besought him to provide for us, explaining our miserable plight; but, upon their arrival, he armed the men on his caravel and would allow no one to go on board, so the most we could obtain from him was that four or five without arms should go aboard. They first explained to him how we had come there to settle for your worship, in the name of His Majesty, and that, on account of the captain having left in a caravel with all we owned, we were in the utmost extremity, as well for want of provisions, arms, and iron tools, as for clothing and other things, and that in as much as God had conducted him hither for our relief and his caravel belonged to His Majesty, we prayed and besought him to provide for us, as by so doing he would serve His Majesty, besides which we bound ourselves to pay for everything he gave us. He answered that he had not come there for the purpose of relieving us, and would give us nothing unless we paid cash down in gold or gave him slaves in payment.

Two merchants who had come on the ship, and a certain Gaspard Roche, a resident of the island of San Juan, advised him to give us what we asked for, offering to stand surety for the payment, up to five or six thousand *castellanos*, within such period as he should fix as they knew we were able to pay, and they were willing to do this in Your Majesty's service; they likewise felt sure that your worship would repay them, besides being grateful for it. Not even then, however, would he give us the least thing, but he sent us away saying he intended to leave; and thus actually put us out of his caravel.

Afterwards, he sent one Juan Ruano, who had come with him, and had been the principal promoter of Cristobal de Olid's treason; he secretly spoke to the munici- pal officers and some of us, telling us that, if we would obey him, he would obtain all we needed from the bach-

Intrusion of Juan Ruano

elor, and that, on his return to Española he would even obtain orders from the judges residing there that we should not have to pay for anything, and that, besides, reinforcements of men and horses and supplies of arms and provisions and other necessaries should be sent to us; that the bachelor would quickly return, bringing us all this and full powers from the judges to be our captain. Having asked him what we were required to do in return, he answered that first of all we were to depose from their respective charges the royal officers, the alcaldes, the municipal officials, the treasurer, the accountants, and the inspector, all of whom exercised their functions in the name of your worship; that after this, we must ask the said bachelor to appoint as our captain the said Juan Ruano, and declare that we wished to come under the government of the *audiencia* instead of under that of your worship; that we must all sign this petition and give our oaths to obey him, Ruano, as our captain, binding ourselves not only to refuse obedience to any representations or orders of your worship but also to resist with force of arms. We answered that we could not do this, for we had already taken another oath, and were settled there for your worship, in His Majesty's name, as his captain and governor, and that we could not act otherwise.

The said Juan Ruano sought to persuade us that it was better to consent than to be left to die; for the bachelor would not give us a jar of water, nor a morsel of bread, and we might rest assured that upon, learning of our refusal, he would sail away and leave us to destruction, hence we should look well to our decision. Thus we took council, and, coerced by want we agreed to all he asked of us, rather than starve or be killed by the Indians, being, as we were, entirely unarmed; so we answered Ruano that we had decided to do what he required of us. He returned therefore to the caravel, and the said bachelor landed, with many armed people; and Juan Ruano had a petition drawn up before the notary of the place, signed by almost every one of us, under oath, to the effect that the municipal officials, the treasurer, the accountant, and the inspector, resigned their respective offices, and that the name of the town waschanged to that of Ascension; he drew up

certain official acts by which we acknowledged our allegiance to the *audiencia* instead of to your worship. He immediately furnished us with all we had asked for, and ordered an expedition to be made, in which we captured certain natives, whom he branded as slaves and took with him, without even allowing that the fifth of them should be paid to His Majesty, ordering that henceforth there should be no treasurer nor accountant, nor inspector for the royal dues, but that the said Juan Ruano, whom he left as our captain, should take all responsibility on himself, without keeping any further books or accounts.

Thus, he left us under command of the said Juan Ruano, furnished with certain requirements to be used in case any people should come here from your worship; and he promised to return quickly with such full powers that no one could resist them. After he had gone, we perceived that what we had done was not for the advantage of His Majesty's service, so we apprehended the said Juan Ruano, and sent him to the Islands, after which the alcalde and municipal officers resumed their functions as formerly, and, since then, we have been, and are, under your worship's orders, in His Majesty's name. We pray you, Sir, to pardon us the past matters, respecting Cristobal de Olid, because, throughout, we were compelled by force to act in this manner.

I replied to this address, saying that I would pardon them, in Your Majesty's name, for all that had transpired under Cristobal de Olid, and that their recent conduct was not blamable as they had been constrained by want; but that, henceforth, they were to abstain from similar novelties and scandals, for they were injurious to Your Majesty's service, and would bring punishment upon them. In order to more fully convince them that I had forgotten the past, and would never more remember it, but would rather aid and favour them, in Your Majesty's name, as long as they acted as loyal vassals to Your Majesty, I confirmed, in Your Royal name, the alcaldes and municipal officers whom Francisco de las Casas,

acting as my lieutenant, had appointed; all of which fully satisfied them, and banished their fear of ever again being questioned for their past faults.

As they assured me that the said bachelor, Moreno, would soon return with many people, fully empowered by the *audiencia*, residing in Española, I did not leave the port. I was informed by the residents that they had had certain conflicts with the natives, some six or seven leagues distant in the interior, when they had gone to search for food. They said that some of the natives, however, were more peaceably inclined than others; for, although they had no interpreter through whom to talk with them, they had shown their good will and friendship by means of signs; also that no doubt these people, being spoken to by one who knew their language, might be easily won over, although they had been several times ill-treated, as the Spaniards had taken from them certain women and boys whom the bachelor, Moreno, had branded with a hot iron as slaves, and carried off in his ship.

God knows how grieved I was by this news, knowing the great mischief that would ensue from it. I wrote, therefore, to the *audiencia* of Española by the vessels I sent to that island, complaining about the bachelor, Moreno, and enclosing a written statement of all his misdeeds in that town and its neighbourhood, besides certain legal requirements on the part of Your Majesty, in which I demanded that the bachelor be sent here a prisoner in chains (and with him all the natives of this country who had been carried off as slaves) because he had outraged all the laws, as they could see by the proofs I remitted to them. I do not know what they will do about it, but I will communicate their decision to Your Majesty.

Cortes Writes to the Audiencia

Two days after I arrived at this port of Trujillo, I sent

a Spaniard, who understood the language, and three Indians of Culua with him, to those towns which the settlers had mentioned to me, instructing the Spaniards and Indians very exactly what they were to say to the chiefs and natives of the said towns, and especially that I myself had come to those parts; for owing to the great traffic many people there had heard of me and of the events in Mexico. The first towns they visited were Chapagua and Papayeca, which are seven leagues from Trujillo, and two leagues distant from one another. They are the principal towns, as I afterwards learned, for Papayeca has eighteen villages subject to it, and Chapagua has ten; and Our Lord, Who our daily experience shows us has especial care of Your Majesty's affairs, was pleased that they should receive the embassy with great deference, and they sent with my messengers, others of their own who might verify if all they had been told was true. I received them very well upon their arrival, and again spoke to them through the interpreter whom I had with me; for their language and that of Culua is almost one and the same, except that they differ somewhat in pronunciation and in some few words. I again assured them of all that my messengers had told them in my name, adding other things which it seemed suitable they should know, and which tended to inspire their confidence; and I earnestly besought them to tell their chiefs to come to see me. They took leave of me entirely satisfied, and five days later a chief, called Montanal, came on behalf of those of Chapagua, he, himself, being as it appeared the chief of one of the subject towns, called Telika; and another lord of a subject town, called Cecoath, came on behalf of those of Papayeca, accompanied by some natives, who brought me provisions of maize and fowls and fruits, saying they had come on behalf of their chiefs to learn what I wished, and the reason of my coming to their country. The chiefs had not come in person to see

me, fearing that they might be taken on board the ships as had happened to certain of their people who had been captured by the first Christians who came there. I told them what grief that event had caused me, and that they might be sure such an outrage would not again happen, for I would send for those who had been carried off and have them returned.

May God grant that the lawyers at Española will not make me forfeit my word to those Indians, though I greatly fear they will not send them back to me, but will rather seek some way to exculpate the bachelor, Moreno, who captured them; for I do not believe that he acted otherwise than according to what they instructed and ordered him.

In answer to the question of those messengers respecting my purpose in coming to that country, I said that they should know how, about eight years before, I had arrived in the province of Culua where Montezuma then ruled the great city of Temixtitan, and all of that country; being informed by me of the greatness and power of Your Majesty, to whom the universal world was subject, and of my having been sent to visit his country in the royal name of Your Excellency, he immediately received me very kindly and recognised what he owed to Your greatness; and that all the other lords in the country had done the same. I recounted to them other things regarding this matter which had happened to me here, and that I was ordered by Your Majesty to see and visit all these countries without exception, and to establish towns of Christians in them, who would teach the people the best way to live, not only for the provision of their persons and property, but also for the salvation of their souls, and that this was the cause of my coming; that they might be sure that no mischief would follow from it, but a great deal of good, for those who obeyed the royal mandates of Your Majesty would be well

treated and maintained in justice, while those who rebelled would be punished. I told them many other things to this purpose, which I do not repeat here on account of their small importance, and to avoid annoying Your Majesty by too much writing.

I gave these messengers some small presents which they esteem, although with us they are of little value, and they took their leave very content. Soon after, in response to my request, they returned with provisions and people to clear the site of the town, which was situated on a great mountain. None of their chiefs, however, came to visit me; but I took no notice of this, treating the matter of their coming as quite indifferent to me, though I requested them to send messengers to all the neighbouring towns to publish what I had told them, asking the people to come to help in settling that town, all of which they did. So, within a few days, fifteen or sixteen towns, or rather independent lordships, in that vicinity came, with many demonstrations of good will, offering themselves as vassals and subjects of Your Highness, and bringing people to help clear the ground for the town, as well as with provisions to sustain us until the assistance arrived with the ships I had sent to the Islands.

Fate of the Four Ships

At this time, I sent the three ships I had with me, besides another one which afterwards came, and which I bought, to carry all the invalids to the ports of New Spain; and with the first I wrote fully to Your Majesty's officers whom I had left in command there, as well as to the municipalities, giving them an account of what I had done, and saying that I was obliged to absent myself somewhat longer in these parts; praying and charging them to fulfil the duties of their offices, and giving them my advice upon certain matters. I ordered this ship to return by way of Cozumel, which was on the route,

and to pick up certain Spaniards there, whom a certain Valenzuela, who had rebelled and robbed the first town which Cristobal de Olid had founded and abandoned, had left there; according to my information, they were about sixty persons. I sent the other ship, which I had lately bought in the small bay near the town, to Trinidad, on the island of Cuba, to load with maize and horses and people, and to return as quickly as possible; the other I sent to the island of Jamaica for the same purpose. The large caravel, or brigantine, which I, myself, had built, I despatched to Española, and on board was a servant of mine, bearing letters for Your Majesty and for the *audiencia* residing in that island. But, as afterwards appeared, none of these ships reached their destination; for the one bound to Cuba and Trinidad had to put in at the port of Guaniguanico, and her crew had to come by land to Havana, a distance of about fifty leagues, in search of cargo. This one was the first to return, and it brought me news of how the other ship, after taking on board the people at Cozumel, had been wrecked on the coast of Cuba, near a cape called San Anton, or Corrientes, everything being lost, and most of her crew drowned, including a cousin of mine, Juan de Avalos, her commander and the two Franciscan friars who accompanied my expedition, besides thirty-four more people whose names I preserved. Those who had been saved were wandering, lost in the forest, not knowing where they were, and almost all had died of starvation; so that, out of eighty odd persons, only fifteen survived, who, by good luck, reached that port of Guaniguanico where my ship was lying. Close at hand, there was a sort of farm, belonging to a resident of Havana, where my ship was being loaded, as he had a stock of provisions; and it was there the survivors found relief. God knows what sorrow I felt at this loss; for, besides losing a number of servants and relatives, and a large

stock of breast plates, muskets, cross-bows, and other arms, I sincerely regretted that my despatches never reached Your Majesty, which was of the greatest consequence to me as I shall hereafter show.

Cortes Receives News from Mexico

The other ship, bound for Jamaica, and the one going to Española arrived at Trinidad in Cuba, where they found the licenciate Alonzo de Zuazo whom I had left as chief justice, and partly in the government of this New Spain during my absence; and they also found in that port a vessel which those licenciates living in Española were on the point of despatching to New Spain to ascertain if the report spread of my death which was spread there, was correct.[1] When the people of the ship learned news of me, they changed their course, because they were bringing thirty-two horses and some saddles for riding in the Moorish style, besides a certain quantity of provisions which they believed they could sell best wherever I was. By this ship, the said licenciate, Alonzo de Zuazo, wrote to me about the great scandals and commotions which had arisen among Your Majesty's officers in New Spain, who had spread the report of my death, and two of whom had proclaimed themselves by public crier as Governors, obliging the people to swear and recognise them as such. They had imprisoned the said licenciate, Alonzo de Zuazo, and two other officers, as

[1] The report of Cortes's death was so persistently spread, and with such details of the time and place of his decease, that his own friends and servants began to believe it. Diego de Ordaz started with four brigantines on the Xicalango River, which empties into the gulf, to ascertain, if possible, the truth of the rumours; he met several Indian traders, who assured him that Cortes had been dead for seven or eight moons, having been captured after a battle in which he was wounded in the throat by the Cacique of Cuzamilco, a town on a lake seven days distant from Xicalango; and that the Cacique had sacrificed him to the principal deity of the place, called Uchilobos. (Letter of Albornoz to Charles V., December 26, 1526, apud Muñoz, tom. lxxvii., fol. clxix).

well as Rodrigo de Paz whom I had left in custody of my house and property; they had plundered everything and removed the alcaldes and judges whom I had appointed, putting in their places others from amongst their adherents. The letter contained many other things which are too long to repeat, as I send to Your Majesty the same original letter which contains them all.

Your Majesty may easily conceive what I felt on the reception of this news, especially when I learned that my services had been rewarded by their pillaging my house,—an unjustifiable thing,—even granting that the news of my death had been true. Even though they allege, in order to justify their conduct, that I owed seventy odd thousand *pesos* of gold to Your Majesty, they know full well that, on the other hand, more than one hundred and fifty thousand such were due to me, which I have spent, and not ill either, in Your Majesty's service. My first impulse in reflecting on the means to correct all this, was to embark at once, and punish so great an outrage; for, now-a-days, everyone who holds an office abroad imagines that, unless he swaggers and shows himself independent, he is no gentleman. I hear that a similar thing has just happened to Pedro Arias with a captain of his whom he sent to Nicaragua and who has recently rebelled against his authority as I will inform Your Majesty more fully hereafter. On the other hand, my soul was afflicted at the thought of leaving that country in the state and condition I would have to, because it was equivalent to allowing it to go to ruin, and I am sure that Your Majesty has received good service and that it will turn out another Culua; for I hear of large and rich provinces and great lords who live in them in much state and magnificence; especially of one, called Hueitapalan, and, in another dialect, Xucutaco,[1] of which I have heard for six years past, and during the

[1] Axucutaco.

whole of my journey have made inquiries about it and ascertained that it lies some eight or ten days' march from Trujillo, which would be between fifty and sixty leagues. There are such wonderful reports about it that they excite my admiration, for, even if two-thirds of them should be untrue, it would nevertheless exceed Mexico in wealth and equal it in the grandeur of its towns, the multitude of its population, and its political organisation. Being thus perplexed, I reflected that nothing is well done save what is guided by the hand of the Creator and Promoter of all things, so I had certain masses celebrated and made processions, offering other sacrifices and beseeching God to lead me in the direction most pleasing to Him.

Cortes Embarks for Mexico

For several days, I continued this, and still it seemed to me I should set aside every other consideration and go at once to remedy those evils. So I left some thirty-five horsemen and fifty foot-soldiers in Trujillo under a cousin of mine, called Hernando de Saavedra, brother of that Juan de Avalos who was drowned coming to that place, who was to act as my lieutenant; and I gave him my instructions as to how he was to govern. Having likewise taken leave of the native lords who had come to see me, I embarked, with all my household servants, on board the said vessel, and, having sent orders to the people in Naco to go overland by the same road Francisco de las Casas had taken (that is to say along the south coast, and come out at the place where Pedro de Alvarado is settled [1]) as now the road was well known and safe, and they were in sufficient numbers to go where they chose, I, likewise, sent instructions to the town of Natividad as to what they were to do. Being already embarked, and about to set sail with the last of anchors weighed, the wind suddenly subsided and my

[1] Santiago de Guatemala was the Governor's residence.

vessel could not leave port. On the next morning, news came that among the people whom I had left in that town there were grumblings about my having absented myself, which would cause certain scandal, and thus, the weather not being propitious for sailing I again landed, made an investigation, and punished the promoters of the trouble so that quiet was restored. I again embarked and set sail, but, after making about two leagues, and doubling a large point in which the port terminates, the main mast of my ship was broken, so again I was forced to return to port and repair it. Three more days were spent for that purpose, when I again left with favourable weather, and, after sailing two nights and one day, a powerful head wind assailed us, breaking our main mast, so that I was again obliged to return to the port with great difficulty. We gave thanks to God for our safe arrival, for indeed we had considered ourselves as lost; and I and all the people were so exhausted that we were obliged to take some rest; so while the ship was being repaired I again landed with all the people to await the change in the weather.

Having seen that I had thrice gone to sea with good weather and been obliged to return, it seemed that it was not God's will that I should leave that country in its present state. I was the more confirmed in this as some of the Indians whom I had left peaceably disposed were in some commotion, so again I recommended myself to God and ordered new processions and had more masses celebrated, and, having reflected, I decided to send that vessel in which I had intended to sail for New Spain, with my cousin Francisco de las Casas on board, provided with my power of attorney, and my letters to the municipalities and Your Majesty's officers, reproving their conduct; also to send some of the principal Indians who were with me, that they might convince their countrymen that I was not dead as had been reported and

thus tranquillise them. I arranged everything thus, although, had I known of the loss of the ship I had first sent and my despatches respecting the ships in the South Sea, which I had sent in her, I would have provided more exact instructions than I did.

After having despatched this ship to New Spain, and while still ill, owing to my sufferings at sea, from which I had not yet recovered, I was unable to go inland; partly, also, because I was waiting for the return of the ships from the Islands, and was occupied in settling various matters. I had sent my lieutenants here with thirty horsemen and as many foot soldiers to explore the interior; and they marched about thirty-five leagues through a very beautiful valley, where there were many and populous villages with an abundance of all kinds of native fruits, and well adapted for raising any kind of cattle, as well as for the cultivation of our Spanish agricultural products. They had no hostile encounters with the natives, but, rather, by speaking to them through our interpreter and the Indians in the neighbourhood, who were already our friends and accompanied the expedition, they succeeded in establishing peaceable relations, so that more than twenty chiefs of the principal towns visited me and offered themselves willingly as subjects and vassals of Your Majesty, promising to obey Your Royal commands, which indeed they have since done and are still doing. For up to the very day of my departure, I had some of them always with me, any one of whom on going away was immediately replaced by another who came and brought provisions for the town, and rendered every service asked of him. May it please God to confirm them in their good will, and guide them to the ends Your Majesty desires; and I have the fullest faith that it will be so; for, from so good a beginning, no bad end is to be expected, unless it be through the fault of those who are placed in command over them.

The provinces of Papayeca and of Champagua, who, I have already said, were the first to offer themselves to Your Majesty's service and to become our friends, were those amongst whom there was some commotion when I had first embarked, and on my return they were still rather apprehensive, so I sent messengers to calm them. Some of the natives of Champagua then came to see me, but not the chiefs, and, as they refrained from coming and sent their wives and sons and their property away from their villages, it was apparent they did not trust us. There were several among those who came daily to work in the town whom I earnestly begged to return to their homes, but they never would, sometimes saying, "to-day," and sometimes, "to-morrow," so I managed to lay hands on the chiefs, Chiwhuytl, Poto, and Mondoreto, whom I imprisoned. I gave them a certain period within which I ordered them to bring their people back from the mountains to their towns, threatening to punish them as rebels if they did not; thus I set them free and the natives have all returned to their homes quite pacified and tranquil, and willing to serve us.

The natives of Papayeca, however, would never consent to appear, especially their chiefs who kept all their people with them in the mountains, their towns remaining deserted; although many times summoned they persisted in their disobedience, so I sent a company of horsemen and foot-soldiers with many natives of the country thither. This force surprised one of the two chiefs of the country, named Pizacura, one night, and captured him; and, having been asked why he was so wicked and disobedient, he said that he would have returned to his village long before had his colleague, Mazatl, who was the most powerful of the community not refused; but that, if they would let him go, he would discover Mazatl's movements so that he could be captured, for if he were hanged the people would immediately be

Execution of Mazatl

pacified and return to their towns, for he, himself could collect them all without any opposition. So they set him free, which was the cause of still greater misfortunes, as afterwards appeared; for certain friendly Indians, natives of that country, tracked the said Mazatl to his hiding place and guided thither some Spaniards. Having notified him what his companion Pitzacura said about him, he was ordered to bring his people down from the mountains into their villages within a given time, but we could never obtain his consent to this. He was consequently tried, sentenced to death, and executed. This has been a great example for the others, for, immediately afterwards, other towns which had rebelled resumed their obedience, so that there is not a single town left that is not perfectly peaceful, with its inhabitants and their families living in security, except Papayeca, which has never been willing to come to terms.

After the release of Pitzacura, proceedings were begun against those towns, and war was carried on against their inhabitants, in the course of which more than one hundred prisoners were taken and made slaves, amongst whom was Pitzacura himself. I would not sentence him to death, although he deserved it, as was shown in the legal proceedings against him, but have preferred to bring him with me to this city, together with two others, chiefs of rebellious towns, so that they might see for themselves how the natives were treated in this New Spain, and how they served, all of which they could make known on their return. Pitzacura died of illness, but the other two are well, and I shall send them back when an opportunity offers. The imprisonment of Pitzacura, however, and of another youth who seemed to be the rightful heir, together with the punishment inflicted on those hundred and odd captives who were made slaves, sufficed to completely pacify the province, and, when I left that country, all the towns were inhabited and at

peace, having been allotted amongst the Spaniards and serving them apparently with entire good will.

The Colony of Pedro Arias

At this time, there arrived at Trujillo a captain with about twenty men of those I had left at Naco, under Gonzalo de Sandoval, and others belonging to the company of Francisco Hernandez, whom Pedro Arias de Avila, Your Majesty's governor in those parts had sent to the province of Nicaragua; I learned from them how the captain of the said Francisco Hernandez had arrived at Naco with about forty men, between horses and foot, expecting to reach the port on the bay of San Andres where he counted on finding the bachelor, Moreno, whom as I have already told Your Majesty had been sent to those parts by the *audiencia* residing in the island of Española. It appeared that the said bachelor had written to Francisco Hernandez inciting him to rebel against his lawful governor, just as he had acted with the people under Gil Gonzalez and Francisco de las Casas. That captain therefore had come for the purpose of concerting with him how best to throw off obedience to their governor, and offer allegiance instead to the *audiencia* of Española; all of which appeared from certain letters which he carried.

I immediately sent those people back with a letter to Francisco Hernandez, and particularly to some of his captains, whom I personally knew, reproving them all for their wicked doings, and explaining to them that the bachelor was deceiving them, and that Your Majesty would be displeased, besides other things which it seemed to me might serve to win them back from the false course on which they had embarked. One reason they gave to justify their conduct was that they were so distant from Pedro Arias de Avila that it was only with much difficulty and great cost that they could be provided with the common necessaries and even then sometimes not provided at all; and that they were always short of

commodities and provisions from Spain, which could easily be obtained at the settlements I had made on that coast. The said bachelor had written to them, saying that all the settlers in the country acknowledged the authority of the *audiencia*, and that he would soon return with people and provisions. I answered them that I would give orders for the settlements to furnish them with everything they needed and to trade amicably with them, as both were equally vassals of Your Majesty and employed in Your Royal service; and that it was to be well understood that this was to continue as long as they obeyed their governor, as was their duty, but not otherwise. Since they told me that what they most required was horseshoes and iron tools for working in the mines, I sent two mules loaded with such things to take back with them, and, when they arrived at the settlement of Hernando de Sandoval,[1] he also gave them two more mules loaded with horseshoes which I had there.

After they left, some natives from the Province of Huilacho, sixty-five leagues from Trujillo, who had previously sent messengers and offered themselves as vassals to Your Majesty, came to see me, and told me that twenty-five horsemen and forty foot soldiers, with many Indians of other provinces, had invaded their country, and were engaged in outraging and injuring them, taking away their wives and children, and robbing them of their goods and chattels. They entreated me to assist them in as much as, when they had become my friends, I had promised to defend them against their enemies. Afterwards, my cousin, Hernando de Sandoval, whom I had left as my lieutenant in those parts, and who was at that time pacifying the provinces of Papayeca, sent me two of those very men of whom the Indians had come to complain. They said they came by order of their captain to search for the town of Trujillo,

[1] Should be *Gonzalo* de Sandoval.

having been told by the Indians that it was near and that they might come without fear as the entire country was at peace. I learned from these men that their companions belonged to Francisco Hernandez and had come, under command of Gabriel de Rojas as their captain, in search of that port. I immediately sent those two Spaniards, together with the natives who had come to complain, and also one of my alguacils, to Gabriel de Rojas, intimating to him to leave that province at once, after restoring to the natives all the property and women and everything else he had taken from them; besides this I wrote him a letter saying that if he needed anything to let me know as I would willingly supply him to the best of my ability. He complied with my mandate and instructions at once, which entirely satisfied the natives of the said province; though afterwards they returned again to complain that when the alguacils whom I had sent returned, they had again been robbed. I wrote therefore to the said Francisco Hernandez, offering to supply him and his men with everything I could which they required, enjoining him to remain loyal to his governor. I do not know what has occurred since then, though I learned from the alguacil I sent to Gabriel de Rojas, and those who went with him, that, when they were all assembled there, a letter from their captain, Francisco Hernandez, had arrived addressed to Gabriel de Rojas, bidding him join him with all possible haste as great dissensions prevailed among his people, two of his captains, named Soto and Andres Garabito, having rebelled on the plea that he was himself about to renounce his allegiance to Pedro Arias. Thus matters remained in such a state that only harmful results could follow, not only to the Spaniards, but also to the natives. Whence Your Majesty may consider the mischievous consequences of these commotions, and how necessary it is that the authors and promoters of them should be punished. I

desired to go at once to Nicaragua, believing that I could devise some remedy for the advantage of Your Majesty's service; and, while making preparations, and having a road opened through some mountains over which I had to pass, the vessel sent by me to New Spain returned to the port of Trujillo, on board which came a cousin of mine called Fray Diego de Altamirano, a Franciscan friar.[1]

Report of Fray Diego de Altamirano

From what he told me, and from the letters he brought, I learned of the many disturbances, scandals, and dissensions, which had broken out among Your Majesty's officials, whom I had left at Mexico in my place; and which still continued, making it necessary that I should immediately repair thither to correct those evils. Hence my journey to Nicaragua and the coast of the South Sea was necessarily abandoned, in spite of my firm belief that much service would have been rendered to God and to Your Majesty, owing to the many extensive and rich provinces which lay on the way; in some of which, although they are at peace, the service of Your Majesty would have been greatly benefited by my passage through them; especially those of Utlatan and Guatemala, where Pedro de Alvarado has always resided. In consequence of certain ill-treatment, they had rebelled and had never afterwards been entirely pacified, but, on the contrary, have done, and continue to do, much harm to the Spaniards who live there, and to their Indian friends. The country is so rough and full of warlike people, so well skilled in the art of warfare, both offensive and defensive, that they have invented pits and other engines to kill the horses, which have been successful; and, although Pedro de Alvarado has unceasingly waged war against

[1] This friar also counselled Cortes to assume more state and dignity, alleging that one reason some of his enemies affected to treat him as a mere soldier of fortune was because he had never insisted sufficiently on what was due to his rank as Captain-General and Governor; from thenceforward he heeded this advice.

them, with more than two hundred horsemen and five hundred Spanish foot soldiers, besides from five to ten thousand Indians, he has so far been unable to reduce them to Your Majesty's service, but on the contrary they become daily stronger through reinforcements of other people. I believe that, had I been able to go that way, I might with God's help, through kindness and other means, have won them over. For some of the provinces which were driven to rebellion by the ill-treatment they received during my absence and against which had marched no less than one hundred and twenty horsemen three hundred footmen, and considerable artillery, besides thousands of Indian auxiliaries, all under command of the inspector who governed at that time, not only continued in their rebellion, but rather succeeded, and killed ten or twelve Spaniards and many Indians; but when I arrived it sufficed to simply send them a message of my speedy coming, for all the principal persons of that province to come and explain to me the cause of their rising. It really seemed to me sufficiently just, for the Spaniards to whom they had been given in charge had burned eight of their principal chiefs alive, five of them dying on the spot, and the remaining three, a few days after; and, although they had demanded reparation and justice, they had not obtained it; so I consoled them in such manner that they went away satisfied, and have so far continued to live peaceably, and to serve as they had done before I went away. Therefore I am persuaded that the other towns in the province of Coatzacoalco, which are in the same plight, on hearing of my arrival, and without even sending messengers to them, will become tranquil.

The Slave Trade

In another part of my narrative, most Catholic Majesty, I have already spoken of certain small islands off the port of Honduras, which are called Los Guanajos, some of which have been depop-

ulated by the expeditions sent there from the Islands to capture its natives and make slaves of them. But some of the inhabitants had survived, and I recently learned in the islands of Cuba and Jamaica that an expedition had just been fitted out to complete the devastation, by carrying away the remainder; so I sent a caravel to stop the armada amongst the said islands, and to enjoin, on the part of Your Majesty, that no sort of injury should be done to the natives, for I intended to pacify them, and bring them to Your Majesty's service, as I had heard from some who were settled on the mainland of their peaceable dispositions. This caravel encountered at one of the islands, called Huititla, another caravel, of which Rodrigo de Merlo was captain. My captain found means to bring him to me with all the natives he had captured in that island. I immediately sent the natives back to their homes, and did not proceed against the captain, for he showed me the written permission he had from the governor of Cuba, with a proper authorisation from the judges residing in the island of Española. I, therefore, dismissed him and his people with no other punishment than that of liberating the captives he had brought from the said Islands; but the captain and most of his company liked the country so much, they remained with us as settlers in those towns.

The chiefs of those Islands recognised the kindness they had received from me, and, having learned from their countrymen who had settled on the mainland, what good treatment I gave them, came to thank me for the benefits I had extended to them, offering themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Highness, and asking me to show them how they could serve; so I ordered them, in Your Majesty's name, that, for the present, they should cultivate the fields in their country, because in truth they are good for nothing else. So they went away carrying for

each of these islands my written order, notifying any Spaniard who might arrive there that they were to be in no manner molested; and they begged me also to place a Spaniard in each of the Islands, which although I could not then agree to, on account of the nearness of my departure, I left instructions with my lieutenant, Hernando de Sandoval, to attend to. Immediately afterwards, I embarked on the ship which had brought me the news of the events in this country, taking in her and in two other vessels which I then had in port, some of the people who had accompanied me on that expedition. We were about twenty in number, with our horses, for most of the people preferred to remain in those towns as settlers, and the others were already waiting for me on the road, thinking I was to return by land. I sent them a message informing them of my departure by sea, and the cause of it, and ordered them to proceed on their march; they have not yet arrived but I have positive information of their coming.

Cortes at Havana

Everything being thus ordered in those towns which I had settled in Your Majesty's name (though to my great regret I was not able to leave them as well provided as I desired) I put to sea on the twenty-fifth of April, with three ships, and sailed with such fine weather that, in four days, I arrived within one hundred and fifty leagues of the port of Chalchicuela.[1] There, I encountered such a heavy storm that I could not proceed, and, believing it would abate, I put out to sea for one day and a night; but such was the tempest that the ships were almost wrecked, and I was driven to take refuge in the Island of Cuba, where, within six days, I entered the port of Havana, being received with rejoicing by the residents, as among them there were many friends of the time when I lived in that island. As the vessels had suffered much damage from the bad weather, it was

[1] Indian name for Vera Cruz. Also spelled Chalchuihcuecan.

necessary to have them repaired, which cost me a delay of ten days, and even obliged me to buy another vessel, which was in port being careened, so that I could leave mine which was leaking badly there.

The day after my arrival at Havana, a vessel from New Spain entered that harbour, and, on the second day there came another, and, on the third day, still another. I learned from them that all the country was at peace, and quite tranquil since the death of the factor and the inspector, though they told me there had been some rioting and that the instigators had been punished. I greatly rejoiced at this news, as I feared my sudden return from my expedition had caused some new uneasiness. Having written, though briefly, to Your Majesty from there, I sailed from Havana on the sixteenth day of May, bringing with me some thirty persons who had come secretly from this place; and within eight days I reached the port of Chalchicuela. I was unable to enter the port, owing to a change of weather, but remained outside some two leagues off. At nightfall, having manned my ship's boat, as well as a brigantine which we had found abandoned at sea, I landed and proceeded on foot to the town of Medellin, about four leagues distant from my landing place; and without having been seen or heard by anyone in the town I went to the church to give thanks to Our Lord. My arrival having become known almost immediately, the inhabitants rejoiced with me, and I with them; and that very night I despatched messengers to this city, as well as to the towns of the country, announcing my arrival to them, and making certain provisions which seemed to me important and to the advantage of Your Sacred Majesty's service, and the good of the country. I remained there eleven days, to obtain some rest, and recover from the fatigues of my long journey,[1]

[1] Cortes was so broken by the fatigues of these expeditions, and so reduced by fever and his wounds, that he was scarcely recognisable,

during which time I was visited by many chiefs and other notable natives of these parts who showed great joy at my arrival. From there, I set out for this city, and was fifteen days on the road, constantly receiving the visits of many natives, some of whom had come eighty leagues to see me; for they had placed their post messengers on the roads so as to be informed of my coming which they were expecting. Thus, in a short time, numbers came from many and distant parts to see me, shedding tears with me, and speaking such affectionate and kind words while they recounted all the troubles they had endured during my absence, in consequence of the bad treatment shown them, that it broke the hearts of all who listened to them. And, although it would be difficult to give a full account to Your Majesty of all the things they related to me, some are worthy enough to be told; nevertheless I reserve them to be told by word of mouth.

Cortes Arrives in Mexico

Upon reaching this city, both Spaniards and natives congregated here and received me with as much joy and gladness as though I were their own father. The treasurer and accountant of Your Majesty came out to receive me at the head of a large

and many could hardly persuade themselves that the emaciated man they saw was the gallant Malinche. He was received with the wildest rejoicing, the Indians outdoing the Spaniards in their enthusiasm; for, despite the sufferings he had brought upon them, he understood how to be kind to them, and, compared with the cold brutality and insatiable rapacity of the mean-spirited officials who had oppressed the natives during his absence, Cortes's treatment of them seemed to these poor people that of a paternal benefactor. Padre Cavo in recounting the events of this period says that "these were surely among the happiest days of Cortes's life, for he could hardly proceed on his march on account of the constant demonstrations of the crowds of Indians who came, some of them even from sixty leagues distant, to see him, and bring him presents, so that, had he been their own king Montezuma, they could not have behaved differently. Cortes more than once was moved to tears by such unexpected demonstration of joy from this simple people."

body of people, on foot and on horseback, all in good order and showing the same signs of good will as all the others; so I went directly to the church and monastery of St. Francis, to return thanks to Our Lord, Who had delivered me from such and so great perils and troubles, bringing me again to repose in peace, and to find a country which had been torn by such commotions in a state of tranquillity and peace.

I remained for six days with the monks to give an account of my sins to God. Two days before I left the convent, a messenger arrived from the town of Medellin, announcing the arrival at that port of certain vessels, in one of which it was reported there came by order of Your Majesty a judge of inquiry. Only the bare fact was known, but I believed that Your Majesty, having heard of the tumults and commotions into which Your Highness's officials had plunged this country which I had left in their charge, and not being sure of my return to it, had ordered the situation to be provided for. God knows how much I rejoiced, as it would have given me much pain to act as judge in this cause, for I had myself been so much injured and ill-treated, and my property so destroyed by these tyrants, that any judgment of mine might have been suspected of proceeding from passion, though indeed no sentence of mine would have exceeded the severity their faults merited. I therefore despatched a messenger in all haste to the port of Medellin, to ascertain with certainty, sending an order also to the Lieutenant of Justice of the said town that Your Majesty's judge should be well received and honoured and lodged in a house which I owned there, and that he, and all who accompanied him, should receive every attention; although as it afterwards appeared he would accept nothing.[1]

[1] As Cortes states, the commissioner showed himself rather reserved towards him, refusing his presents and deprecating his hos-

The day after I despatched that message, which was the feast of St. John, another messenger arrived while I was witnessing certain bull fights and other games proper for the festivity, bringing me a letter from the said judge, and another from Your Sacred Majesty, from which I learned the purpose of his coming, and that Your Catholic Majesty had been pleased to order an investigation into my administration of the government of this country. In truth, I greatly rejoiced, not only for the immense favours Your Sacred Majesty has done me in desiring to be informed of my services and faults, but also for the graciousness with which Your Highness has been pleased to let me know through your letter Your Royal intentions to reward me. For the one and the other I kiss the Royal Feet of Your Catholic Majesty a hundred thousand times, and may God, our Lord, grant that, after receiving such favours, I may still be able to serve somewhere, and that Your Catholic Majesty may recognise the sincerity of my desire, which recognition alone will be no small reward for me.

Arrival of Luis Ponce de Leon

In the letter which the Judge Luis Ponce wrote me, I was informed that he was about leaving for this city, and, as there are two principal roads by which he might come and he did not state which of them he proposed to follow, I sent serv-

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pitable intentions. He over-ate himself at the splendid banquet he did attend at Iztapalapan, being especially intemperate in the matter of iced drinks of various sorts, so that he was seized with chills, fever, and violent vomiting from which he shortly died. Cortes's account of others falling ill, and a sort of epidemic introduced by the newcomers prevailing, is not confirmed by the reports of others present. Cavo says just the contrary, that, though the others at the banquet ate and drank freely of everything, nobody else suffered from it. The report that the commissioner had been poisoned was at once started, and Albornoz, who left for Spain just at that time, carried the tale thither; so that not even the sworn statement of the doctors who attended Ponce de Leon, affirming that he died of a malignant fever sufficed to entirely kill this calumny.

ants of my household upon each of them to wait upon him and show him the way. The said Luis Ponce travelled in such haste, however, that, although we had used all despatch, my people met him only twenty leagues from this city; and although he received my messengers cordially he refused to accept their services. Although I was sorry at this, because, owing to his hurried travelling he required assistance, I was on the other hand glad, because his refusal proved him to be a just man, who desired to execute his functions with all straightforwardness, and inasmuch as he had come to investigate my conduct, he was unwilling to give rise to suspicion by accepting my hospitality. He arrived one evening two leagues from this city, where he passed the night; and I prepared everything to receive him properly on the following day, but he sent me word not to come out to meet him in the morning, as he intended to dine where he was, asking me merely to send him a chaplain to say mass for him, which I did. Suspecting that this was only an excuse, as it afterwards turned out to be, to avoid the reception, I was on my guard, but he left so early that although I made all haste, he was already within the city when I met him; so we rode together to the monastery of St. Francis, where we assisted at mass. After this, I said that, if he desired to present his provisions then, it could be done, for the entire municipal council of the city was assembled there, as well as the treasurer and accountant of Your Majesty. He declined to do this, saying that he would present them the next day. And, so it was done; for, the next day, we assembled in the principal church of the city (the dean and chapter, as well as the said officials and myself being present), when the said Luis Ponce presented the royal letters, which I, and all those who assisted at the ceremony, received and kissed, and placed upon our heads as provisions of our King and rightful Sovereign,

to be obeyed and complied with in all respects, and by everyone, according as Your Sacred Majesty was pleased to order. The municipal officers delivered their wands into his hands, and all the other ceremonies were complied with, as Your Majesty will see by the official acts drawn by the notary public of the municipal council, in whose presence everything was executed. The public crier announced in the square of the city the investigations which Luis Ponce had come to institute, but during seventeen days no one presented any complaint against me. About this time, the said judge Luis Ponce fell ill, as did also those who had come with him in his armada, and, the disease increasing, it was God's pleasure that he should die of it, as did also thirty others, amongst whom were two monks of the order of St. Dominic; moreover, even at this time there are still many persons ill and in danger of death; for the disease they brought with them in that armada seemed almost to be a plague, as even some who reside here took the contagion and two of them died, while others are still in a convalescent state.

Immediately after the death of Luis Ponce, his funeral was celebrated with all the honour due to a person of his authority sent by Your Majesty. I was then earnestly requested by the Municipal Corporation of this city as well as by the Procurators of all the towns who had assembled here, to take charge of the government, in the name of Your Catholic Majesty, and to carry on the administration of justice conceded me by Your Majesty's order and by Your Royal Provisions, giving their reasons therefor, and explaining the evils which would follow in case I would not accept it, as Your Majesty may see by the report of these proceedings which will accompany this letter. I sought to excuse myself from this, as will appear by the said copy, but other requirements have since been made of me in the same sense, pointing out

greater evils as likely to follow should I not accept, and, though I have defended myself until now and have not yielded, I can see that there do in reality exist some evils. But I desired Your Majesty should be convinced of my purity and fidelity in Your Royal service, which is my chief aim, because thinking otherwise of me, all other good things in this world are nothing to me, and I would rather die. I have therefore put aside everything for this purpose and insist with all my influence upon a certain licenciate, called Marcos de Aguilar, whom the said Luis Ponce brought as hɐɔlɐ ɪs'ɹoʎɐɯ əpl as his successor, requesting and entreati Suhim to continue the investigation to its finish. He has refused to do this, alleging insufficient powers, for which I am exceedingly sorry, as there is nothing in the world I desire so much as to have Your Majesty properly informed of my virtues and sins (and this not without reason) for I believe, as an article of faith, that Your Catholic Majesty will grant me ample rewards, not taking into consideration the smallness of my past services, but because Your Majesty is bound to display munificence towards one who has served you with such fidelity as I have.

Accusations against Cortes

Nothing of this should be allowed to remain obscure, but all the good and bad of my services should be manifestly and clearly published, for it is a point of honour with me, to obtain which I have gone through so many trials, and exposed myself to so many dangers. So that I hope that neither God, nor Your Majesty out of respect to Him, will allow invidious and corrupt tongues to deprive me of what I prize most. I neither desire nor ask of Your Majesty any other reward in payment of my services than this. God grant that I shall not live without it. I feel, Most Catholic Prince, that, from the beginning of my expeditions, I have had many and powerful rivals and enemies; yet their wickedness and

malice have not sufficed to eclipse the fame of my fidelity and services; hence in despair they have sought to obscure Your Majesty's vision, and lead you astray from the Holy and Catholic intentions which I have always recognised in Your Excellency, to acknowledge and reward my services. One of their means is to accuse me before Your Majesty of treason, saying that I refused obedience to Your Royal commands; that I held this country not in Your Powerful name, but under my own tyrannical and despotic rule, for which they give some depraved and diabolical reasons which are entirely false and spring from their depraved invention.[1]

Did they but look sincerely into my acts, and were they just judges, they would be forced to recognise the reverse of what they declare, for, up to now, it has not been, nor will it ever be, seen whilst I live that any letter or command of Your Majesty has been refused scrupulous obedience. Now the iniquity and malice of those who have made these accusations will be more clearly and entirely proved and made manifest, because, had what they say been true, I would certainly not have gone six hundred leagues from this city, through an uninhabited country, and by dangerous roads, leaving the government to Your Majesty's officials whom I had every reason to believe were most zealous in the Royal service though indeed their actions did not correspond to the confidence I placed in them. Their other argument is that I held the greater part of the natives here as my slaves, treating them as such and profiting by their services and work, by which means I have amassed a large sum of gold and silver treasure, and that I have used the revenues of Your Catholic Majesty, without necessity, to the sum of sixty odd thousand *pesos* of gold; also that I have not sent the full amount of the Royal revenues to Your Excellency, retaining them under various pre-

[1] See appendix to this Letter.

texts for purposes which I have not succeeded in accomplishing. I can easily believe that, perhaps, they partly believed this, as such rumours are current, but they are contrary to the facts, and I am fully confident that the first use of the touchstone will suffice to discover the counterfeit. As to what they say about my possessing the large portion of the land, I admit this to be true, and I have likewise had for my share a good sum and quantity of gold; but I declare it has not been sufficient to raise me above poverty, and free me from debt, for I owe more than five hundred thousand *pesos* in gold, to pay which I do not possess a single *peso;* because, if my share has been large, the expenditures have been greater, for I have consumed very large sums, not in buying lands, nor in founding entails, nor acquiring any sort of property for myself and heirs, but in extending the dominion and patrimony of Your Highness in these parts, and in gaining and conquering many kingdoms and lordships for Your Excellency, and exposing myself to risks and dangers.

Cortes Renders Account

These malicious men will never be able to conceal, or defame with their viperous tongues, these services, because, by examining my books, it will be found that I have spent in these conquests more than three hundred thousand *pesos* in gold belonging to my own fortune and household; having finished with that, I have spent sixty thousand *pesos* in gold, belonging to Your Majesty, which were not used for me, for I never touched them, but they were paid out on my vouchers for the cost and expenses of this conquest. Whether they have been profitably spent or not may be seen by the patent results which are manifest to all. Respecting what they say of my not sending the revenues to Your Majesty, this is also manifestly contrary to the truth, because, in the short time which has elapsed since I came here, more treasure has been sent to Your Majesty than from all the

Islands and mainland put together, which we discovered and peopled thirty odd years ago at great expense and outlay, made by the Catholic Kings, your grandparents, which was not the case in this country. Not only have I sent to Your Majesty all belonging to Your Royal dues, but I have also sent what belonged to me, and those who attended me, taking no account of what we have here spent in Your Royal service. When I sent the first remission to Your Majesty, with Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, we not only sent the fifth of all that had been acquired which belonged to Your Majesty, but the entire amount of what had been obtained; for it seemed right of me to do so, being, as these things were, the first fruits.

Afterwards, the fifth of all the gold obtained in this city during the lifetime of its sovereign, Montezuma, was sent to Your Majesty; I mean of that part which was smelted, and which amounted to thirty odd thousand *castellanos;* and, although the jewellery ought also to have been distributed, giving the people their shares, both they and I were glad to send all of it to Your Majesty, which amounted to more than five hundred thousand *pesos* in gold. The loss of all this when it was taken from us on our expulsion from this city during the rebellion, caused by the coming of Narvaez to this country, although deserved for my sins, was not caused by my negligence.

When the city was reconquered and reduced to the royal service of Your Highness the same course was followed; of the gold that was smelted, one-fifth was assigned to Your Majesty; and I also obtained that all of jewels and other valuable objects belonging to my men should be sent to Your Highness, and these were certainly not less valuable and precious than the first we had secured. I despatched them together with thirty thousand *pesos* of gold, in bars, in charge of Julian

Alderete, Your Majesty's treasurer in these parts, but they were captured by the French.[1] Neither was this my fault, but rather the fault of those who did not provide a sufficient armada in time to go to the Azores for the protection of such an important treasure. As I was starting on my later expedition to the Gulf of Hibueras, I, likewise, sent to Your Excellency sixty thousand *pesos* of gold, by Diego de Ocampo and Francisco de Montejo; and, if a greater amount was not sent, it was owing to the orders issued by Your Majesty's Council of the Indies, respecting the gold to be sent from these parts to Spain; for, indeed, we somewhat exceeded ourselves and contravened the orders in sending such an amount at one time. We ventured to do this, however, on account of the stress in which Your Majesty was for want of money, and I, likewise, sent at the same time to Your Highness, with my servant Diego de Soto, everything I possessed, there not being one *peso* of gold left me, including a field piece which in its material and manufacture had cost me more than thirty-five thousand *pesos* in gold[2]; likewise certain jewels of gold and stones which belonged to me, and which I sent, not so much on account of their value, although this was not insignificant for me, but because the French had captured the first consignment I had sent, and it grieved my soul that Your Sacred Majesty should not have seen those things. Thus, in order that a sample might be seen, even though trifling in comparison with the things I first sent, I sent all I possessed of the kind. Hence, I cannot understand what reason there could be for keeping back anything belonging to

[1] See Note to Fourth Letter, p. 159.

[2] Already in the Fourth Letter, Cortes explained to the Emperor the exact cost of this unique piece of artillery; that he here repeats himself may be due to reasonable fear that his former letter never reached its destination; for many of those he wrote were lost. He has no delicacy about insisting upon the value of his gift to the Emperor.

Your Highness, when I have desired with pure zeal only to serve Your Catholic Majesty with all I possess. I am, likewise, told by the officials, that, during my absence, certain quantities of gold have been remitted, so that, in truth, the remittances have never ceased being sent every time an opportunity offered.

Cortes Proposes to Return to Spain

It has, likewise, been stated, most Powerful Lord, that Your Majesty has been informed that I received, from the province allotted to me, profits amounting to an income of two hundred millions. As my desire neither is, nor has been, other than that Your Catholic Majesty should know beyond all doubt my zeal for Your service, and should be entirely satisfied that I have always told, and will tell the truth, I cannot manifest it better than to place this much revenue at Your Majesty's disposition, and there could be no better opportunity than the present to dispel any suspicions, which, according to public rumour, Your Majesty has concerning me; hence I beseech Your Majesty to accept for your service all that I possess here and to do me the favour of granting me instead a donation of twenty millions in Spain. In this way, Your Majesty will keep the remaining one hundred and eighty millions, and I shall live contentedly at Your Majesty's Court, where no one, I protest, will exceed me in fidelity, nor dare to doubt my services to the Crown. I shall, also, be better able to serve Your Majesty there, for, being an eye witness, I can inform Your Highness as to what will most advance Your Royal service, preventing any false accounts from deceiving Your Highness. I assure Your Sacred Majesty that my service there will not be of less importance, for my advice may help to preserve this land, and advance the conversion of the natives to our Catholic Faith, and increase Your Majesty's revenues in these parts, rather than see them diminished as has happened in the Islands

and on the mainland for want of good government, when the Catholic Kings, grandparents of Your Majesty, not being properly counselled, but advised by interested people who misrepresented the true conditions, as indeed all those have done who have sent reports from those countries. For two reasons I do desire of Your Sacred Majesty so great a favour as to allow me to come and serve in Your Royal presence, the first and principal one being to satisfy Your Majesty and the rest of the world of my loyalty and fidelity in Your Royal service, because I esteem this more than anything else in the world; for, if I have exposed myself to so many fatigues and dangers, and have suffered such hardships, it was to gain the renown of being a servant of Your Majesty, and of Your Royal and Imperial Crown, and not from covetousness of treasures. Of treasures, indeed, I have had a sufficient quantity if they could satisfy me,—I mean for such a modest esquire as myself,—nor would I have spent them lavishly to advance that which I hold to be my first and most important object. If I have not obtained that favour, which I so much covet, doubtless my sins have been the cause, and I believe that nothing is capable of satisfying me if this immense favour which I implore, is not granted me by Your Majesty.

Lest Your Majesty should imagine that I ask too much, though the sum is hardly sufficient for my decent maintenance at Court, I will be contented with ten millions of yearly revenue.[1] This would enable me to appear worthily after having held the charge of Governor in the Royal name of Your Majesty in these parts, and having extended the Royal patrimony and dominion of Your Majesty by bringing under Your Princely yoke so many provinces, peopled by so many and such great cities; and by destroying idolatries and offences against our

[1] Meaning presumably the yearly revenue from a capital of ten millions, though it is expressed as here translated.

Creator, and converting many natives to His knowledge by planting the true Catholic Faith in this land. If they are not prevented by those who look upon these things with evil eyes, and whose zeal is directed to other ends, a new Church will very certainly be raised shortly in these parts, where God, our Lord, will be better served and honoured than anywhere else in the world. I repeat, that, if Your Majesty will grant me ten millions of revenue in your realms, and allow me to serve you in Spain, I shall consider it a great favour, even leaving behind all I possess here; for thus my desire to serve Your Majesty in Your Royal presence will be satisfied, and Your High ness will likewise be convinced of my loyalty and zeal.

The other reason for wishing to appear before Your Majesty is that I may give information respecting the state of this country, and even of the Islands, which will advance the service of God, our Lord, and of Your Majesty; for, on the spot, my words, would be believed, which is not the case respecting what I write from here, as what I say has been attributed to my interested motives and not to my zeal as a vassal of Your Sacred Majesty.

My desire to kiss the Royal feet of Your Sacred Majesty, and to be promoted to serve in Your Royal Presence is beyond all expression. If Your Highness be not pleased to allow this, or deems it inopportune to grant me the favour I beg, by allowing me a set yearly income to support me at Court, I pray Your Highness to allow me to retain in this country what I now possess here, or what my agents will beseech Your Majesty, in my name, granting it as a perpetual pension for myself and my heirs, so that I may not be obliged to return to Spain, asking people for God's sake to give me food. I shall consider it a great boon if Your Majesty will grant what I so fervently desire, for I trust in my service and in the Catholic conscience of Your Sacred Majesty and that,

beholding the purity of my intentions, Your Highness will not allow me to live poor.

The arrival of this judge of inquiry seemed to me to furnish a good occasion and sufficient cause for the accomplishment of my said wish; and I even began to put it into execution, but was hindered by two things; one of which was that I was without money, for my house in this city had been pillaged and robbed of all its contents, as Your Majesty is already apprised; and the other was the fear that, during my absence in this country, the natives might rebel, and dissensions might break out amongst the Spaniards; for the experience of the past may well serve to forecast the future.

Expedition of Loaysa

While I, Most Catholic Lord, was engaged in preparing this despatch for Your Sacred Majesty, a messenger arrived from the South Sea, bringing me a letter that a ship had arrived on that coast, near a place called Tecoantepeque, which, as it appeared from another letter addressed to me by the captain of the said ship, and which I send to Your Majesty, belongs to the armada sent under command of the Captain Loaysa to the Malucco Islands.[1] Your Majesty will learn from this captain's letter the incidents of his voyage, so I will not repeat them to Your Highness but limit myself to explaining what I did. I immediately sent a competent person to the place

[1] This fleet of some six vessels under command of Garcia Jofre de Loaysa sailed in August, 1525, for the Molucca Islands, a convention having been previously established with Portugal to avoid a conflict of claims. It encountered many misfortunes, and its commander, the navigator Sebastian del Cano, and other officers, died during the voyage. The vessel, of which Cortes writes, reached the Mexican coast under command of Fortunio de Alango, her captain, Santiago de Guevara, having succumbed to the privations of the voyage when in sight of port. Only one of Loaysa's ships reached its proposed destination, and founded a small struggling settlement on the *Isla de los Reyes*, which was later abandoned when the Spanish crown lost interest in the Spice Islands' ventures (Bancroft, *Hist. Mex.*, vol. ii., cap. xiii).

where the ship had arrived, to arrange for the said captain to return to Spain immediately if he so desired, providing him with everything necessary for his voyage; and to learn from him the particulars of his voyage so that I might make a full report of everything to Your Highness as soon as possible. Lest the ship might need repairs I also sent thither a pilot to bring her to the port of Zacatula, where I have three ships ready to start on a voyage of discovery in those parts and coasts, and I gave orders that she should be repaired and refitted for Your Majesty's service, and for the needs of her voyage. As soon as I receive information from the ship, I shall immediately forward it, so that Your Majesty, being fully informed, may give the orders most expedient for Your Royal service.

My ships in the South Sea, as I have told Your Majesty, are prepared to start on their voyage; for, as soon as I arrived in this capital, I began to hasten their departure; and they would already have sailed but that they were waiting for certain arms, artillery, and ammunition, which had come from Spain, for their service and that of Your Majesty. I hope, in Our Lord, that Your Majesty's good fortune will enable me to render good services by this voyage; for, even if a strait should not be discovered, I hope to find some route to the Spice Islands, so that Your Majesty may have yearly news of events there. Should Your Majesty be pleased to grant me the favours I have asked in a certain capitulation respecting that discovery, I offer myself to conquer all the Spiceries, and any other islands there may be between Malucco, Malacca, and China, and to arrange matters so that, instead of obtaining spices and drugs by trading with the king of Portugal, who now owns them, Your Majesty may obtain them as your own property, once the natives of those islands have acknowledged Your Majesty as their king and rightful



MAP OF THE SOUTH SEA AND THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA

This map is reproduced from the original found in the possessions of the Marques del Valle. It shows in the upper part a city which, according to all accounts was really believed at that time to exist and was called Quivira. Two rivers are marked in the estuary of the Rio Colorado in the Gulf of California, one of which, called the Buena Guia may be the Colorado, the other called Miraflores may be the Gila, which uniting into one stream follow into the Gulf of California.

sovereign. For, I pledge myself, if the said grants be made to me, to send such an armada thither, or to go myself personally, as will subdue those islands, settling Spaniards there whom I will provide with forts and the necessary artillery and war stores to defend themselves against all the princes of those parts or any other. Should Your Majesty be pleased that I undertake this business, granting me what I asked, I believe it will be for the good of Your service; and I propose that, should it not turn out as I have stated, Your Majesty shall order me to be punished as one who has reported falsely to his Sovereign.

Since my return, I have, likewise, ordered people to go overland to settle on the River Tabasco, which is also called Grijalba, and to conquer many provinces in that neighbourhood, whereby God, our Lord, and Your Majesty, will be well served, and the ships navigating in those parts will derive much benefit. The port is a good one, and, if populated by Spaniards, and if the coast tribes be pacified, the vessels coming and going will be safe, whereas heretofore the natives there have been savage, and have killed the Spaniards who landed there.

As Your Majesty has already been informed, I have also sent three companies of men to the province of the Zapotecas[1] to invade it in three different places, so as to complete its reduction in the shortest possible period; this will be of great service, not only because of the mischief which those natives work on the other peaceable ones in the neighbourhood, but also because they occupy the richest mining districts existing in New Spain, from which, when conquered Your Majesty will derive great

[1] During this expedition against the Zapoteca and Mixi tribes, the Spaniards accumulated about one hundred thousand *pesos* of gold, partly by rifling the graves of chiefs. The leaders were inexperienced, and fell to quarrelling amongst themselves. One of their ships with some fifteen men, and all the treasure, foundered in a gale off Vera Cruz.

profit. I have, likewise, prepared an expedition to settle on the banks of the River Las Palmas,[1] which is on the north coast, below Panuco, in the direction of Florida, for I have been informed that the land is good and that there is a seaport; all of which persuades me that God, Our Lord, and Your Majesty will not be less served there than in other parts.

[1] The territory of Rio de las Palmas just north of Panuco had been granted to Panfilo de Narvaez, and was reputed to be extraordinarily rich in gold and precious stones. Cortes's proposed expedition was withdrawn to avoid encroaching on the rights of Narvaez, and a free hand was thus left to Nuño de Guzman, a man of noble birth from Guadalajara, who had been for some years at Puerta de Plata in San Domingo, until, through Diego Velasquez's influence, he was appointed Governor of Panuco. For cruelty, rapacity, and violence, he was among all the Spaniards in Mexico, either before or after him *facile princeps*. In his Governorship of Panuco, he had already violated all the conventions with the natives, and, in defiance of the royal ordinances, had so hunted down the Indians, branding them and shipping as slaves to the Islands, that his province was almost depopulated. He was just as violent in his treatment of the Spaniards, directing his severities, especially towards all who were known as friends of Cortes.

He invaded neighbouring provinces, and, when the settlers resisted, his superior force enabled him either to drive them out, seize their lands, or to capture them, and, without even a trial, condemn them to torture and death. He nailed one Spaniard to a tree by a nail through his tongue for using impertinent language to him.

Promoted to the Governorship of Mexico, the field for carrying on his sinister exploits was enlarged, and no oppression, extortion, or outrage, which his fiendish ingenuity could devise, or his avarice suggest, was omitted to subjugate all alike to his will; later his expedition into the north-west left the same trail of robbery and murder behind. He was finally arrested and sent to Spain for trial, where, in 1540, Cortes had the magnanimity to interest himself in behalf of his old enemy, who was penniless, friendless, and in prison at Torrejon de Velasco, some eight leagues distant from the capital, even sending him money for his wants. Guzman died, however, before his trial was finished. Bustamente moralises on the strange contradiction in the character of Cortes, which prompted such generosity to the most inveterate enemy he had ever had, one who since years had worked him every injury in his power, while he showed himself so heartless in his treatment of the brave King Quauhtemotzin, whom he hanged in the dead of night, in the wilds of Yucatan, for no fault whatever, after having robbed and tortured him in Mexico.

Between the northern coast and the Province of Mechoacan, there is a certain tribe called Chichimecas.[1] They are a very barbarous people, and not so intelligent as those of these provinces. I have, likewise, sent sixty horsemen, two hundred foot soldiers, and many native allies, against them, to discover the secrets of that province and its people. I have instructed them that, should they find the people there susceptible of civilisation and conversion to Our Faith, as these others have been, and showing a disposition for Your Majesty's service, to make some settlement in the country, and to bring them peaceably under the yoke of Your Majesty. But that if they did not find them as I have just said, but rebellious and disobedient, to make war on them and reduce them to slavery; for, there is nothing so superfluous in this country as those who refuse to acknowledge and serve Your Majesty. By making slaves of these barbarians, who are almost savages, Your Majesty will be served, and the Spaniards greatly benefited, as they will dig for gold, and perhaps through contact with us, some of them may save their souls.

Expedition against the Chichimecas

I have learned that, in the midst of these Chichimecas, there are some thickly populated parts where there are large towns whose people live in the same manner as the Mexicans. Some of these towns have even been seen by Spaniards, and I am confident that the country will be settled, for I am assured that it abounds in silver mines.

About two months before leaving this capital for the

[1] The Chichimecas were the most ancient of Mexican nations, and were savages dwelling in caves, living by the chase, and having nothing of the Aztec civilisation, and yet, according to Motolinia (Toribio de Benevente) they were monogamists, sun-worshippers, and made no human sacrifices, their offerings being snakes and butterflies.

Gulf of Hibueras, most Powerful Lord, I despatched a captain to the town of Coliman, which is on the South Sea, one hundred and four leagues from here, ordering him to follow that coast, for a hundred and fifty or two hundred leagues, for the sole purpose of learning all about it, and of discovering if there were any ports. He executed my orders, penetrating one hundred and thirty leagues inland, and bringing me an account of many ports he had found on the coast. This was of no small advantage, on account of the general dearth of them up to the present time; he had visited many and very considerable towns, and several numerous and warlike tribes, with whom he had encounters, and many of whom he pacified; his small force and the want of pasturage for his horses prevented his going further. His account also described a very large river, which the natives told him was ten days' march from its source, and about which, and the people inhabiting its banks, they told me many strange things. I am about to send him again with a larger force and better equipment, so that he may explore the secrets of that river, which, judging from the size and importance the natives attribute to it, I would not be surprised if it turned out to be a strait; as soon as he returns I shall relate to Your Majesty what I have learned.

All these captains are on the point of starting on their expeditions: may God be pleased to guide them according to His Will. For my own part, even should Your Majesty visit Your displeasure on me, I shall not cease to devote myself to Your service, holding it impossible that Your Majesty should fail, for any length of time, to recognise my services; but, even if this should happen, I shall remain satisfied with having done my duty, and knowing that all the world is aware of the loyalty with which I have performed it, nor do I wish for any other inheritance for my children.

Most Invincible Cæsar may God, Our Lord, preserve the life, and augment for long years the power of Your Sacred Majesty according to Your desires. From this city of Temixtitan, on the third day of September, 1526.

HERNANDO CORTES.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

On August 27, 1529, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, bishop of Mexico, addressed a lengthy report to Charles V., recapitulating the events of the conquest, and exposing the actual condition of the country, notably the official anarchy prevailing in the capital during the absence of Cortes in Honduras. The bishop's impartiality in all that concerns the conduct of Cortes and that of his enemies gives great value to his testimony, and I have thought well to translate that part of his letter which deals particularly with the state of things in Mexico up to the time of Cortes's visit to Spain. Read in connection with the narrative of the Fifth Letter, these passages will be seen to confirm the latter's statements in his various letters to the Emperor, many of which they also complete and elucidate.

I know of no English translation of this important document, but in the valuable collection of *Voyages, Relations, et Mémoires* of Ternaux-Compans an excellent French translation of the entire letter may be found.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM BISHOP ZUMARRAGA TO CHARLES V. INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The grace, the peace, and the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Majesty, and may Your Majesty read attentively this letter, which is written with the sincere and loyal intention of serving God and Your Majesty. I write dispassionately, and to make myself useful to the inhabitants of this country, both Spaniards and natives, and for the discharge of my conscience and the fulfilment of the duties of my office, which I have accepted as a cross and a martyrdom. I shall state the truth, even should it cost me my life, which is said to be menaced by the hatred of my enemies. He who shall judge us all will take account of the persecutions I suffer for His cause.

Immediately upon my arrival in this country, and after consulting the most serious religious men, as well as the conquerors and the oldest inhabitants, I addressed to Your Majesty a report on the condition in which I found it. But now that I have acquired more experience and have been able to inform myself by conversing with the natives, I am able to make known the Spaniards' manner of viewing things and all that has happened since the arrival of the royal *Audiencia* with which I came, and it is in God's name that I entreat Your Majesty to graciously correct the abuses.

Your Majesty knows that when Fernando Cortes first came to this country, he was sent by the Governor of Cuba, Diego Velasquez, to search for Grijalba, who had been sent by the governor with a fleet on a voyage of discovery. Velasquez ordered Cortes to return with Grijalba in case he found him, as he had no permission from your Majesty to undertake conquests. In case he did not find him, the governor's orders were that Cortes should trade along the coast, exchanging the merchandise he had brought from Cuba for that purpose, for gold; after which he was to return to Cuba. As Grijalba was already back before Cortes set sail, the latter should have abandoned his expedition for, with the cessation of the cause, the effect should cease. Cortes, however, seeing himself in command of men and ships, and led doubtless by an inspiration of God, who wished to deliver this country from the devil, did not obey the instructions of Velasquez. He left, and guided by divine Providence he soon reached the first harbour of Mexico, which is called San Juan de Ulua. The country pleased him greatly, and he thought to render Your Majesty a great service in colonising it. He therefore landed, contrary to the orders he had received, and wrote to Your Majesty and likewise to Diego Velasquez, to explain his conduct. Some approved of his addressing himself directly to Your Majesty and sending the gold he had obtained, but others blamed him, declaring he should have sent it to Velasquez. Thus the force of Cortes was divided into two parties, but his friends prevailed and proclaimed him captain-general. He succeeded in reducing the partisans of Velasquez to obedience, though only after much trouble, for they even tried several times to assassinate him. Providence preserved him for the conquest of this country, for according to all impartial people it would never have been accomplished without him. He obtained possession of all Mexico and its capital. Your Majesty knows the details of this achievement.

As soon as the country was subdued, Cortes, in response to the prayer of Your Majesty's treasurer, Julian de Alderete, and of all the conquerors, made a repartition of the Indians. The country was on the verge of destruction, for under pretext of seeking provisions, the Spaniards took possession of everything they found. This was the reason why he decided to make that repartition, in making which he however secured for himself and his friends everything most worth having. Many of the conquerors, and especially those who had shown themselves partisans of Diego Velasquez, were little satisfied with the share he allotted them. He had assigned the most important towns and provinces to Your Majesty, but afterwards he took them away from the royal officials who were already in possession of them, saying that by giving them as *Encomiendas* to individuals, one fifth of the tributes which the holders would be obliged to pay would bring more to the royal treasury, while all the profit went to the royal officials and their servants. He took for himself the royal city of Texcoco, which formerly belonged to the royal domain, and distributed the

rest as he pleased. A short time after the conquest and partition of Mexico, Your Majesty's officers, Alonso de Estrada, Rodrigo de Albornoz, Gonzalo de Salazar, and Pero Almendez Chirino, arrived. Cortes gave them the best reception, installing them in their offices and overwhelming them with favours. They all made him the greatest demonstrations of friendship, including even the factor Salazar.

At that time Cortes sent captains commanding a good number of men to explore the country in all directions and to examine which provinces would it be most suitable to colonise. Among these there was Cristobal de Olid, whom he furnished with a fleet and an army to colonise the province of Hibueras and the Cape of Honduras, which was reputed to be a very rich country. The preparations for this expedition cost Cortes a good deal of money. But Cristobal de Olid, who had served under Cortes, no sooner observed the wealth of the country than he resolved to become independent. As soon as Cortes learned this, he despatched several officials to summon him to recognise his authority, but as Olid obstinately refused to do this, Cortes decided to go in person, nothing daunted by the difficulties such a long overland journey offered.

Cortes set out therefore, leaving the licenciate Zuazo as chief justice of the entire country, and giving him power to decide all contentions. He associated the treasurer, Alonso de Estrada, and the accountant, Albornoz, with him in the government.

Hardly had Cortes left the city when Estrada and Albornoz quarrelled, abusing one another, and even drawing their swords. Informed of these disorders by letters which he received from Mexico, Cortes sent back from Guazacalco, where he then was, the factor Gonzalo de Salazar and the inspector Peralmindez Chirino, charging them to quell the disturbances. He gave them two sets of instructions. According to one they were, should they find Albornoz and Estrada reconciled, merely associated with the government, and all four were to govern in accord with the licenciate Zuazo, who, as jurisconsult, retained the exclusive administration of justice. But if the discord still continued, Salazar and Chirino were authorised by the other set of instructions to assume the reins of government alone. Urged by their ambitions, these two came to an understanding with Albornoz who so thoroughly detested Estrada that he consented to be deprived of his own power if only the other were involved in his fall and punished, as the author of all the troubles.

In agreement with Albornoz, the envoys of Cortes destroyed the first instructions, and only produced the others which provided that since Estrada and Albornoz could not agree, the envoys were to replace them in the government. At first Estrada submitted, but becoming then reconciled with Albornoz and learning from him the history of the destroyed papers, they both went to complain to the licenciate Zuazo, and demanded to be recognised once more as members of the government. Zuazo decided in their favour, but many troubles

and disorders ensued on account of this affair, and several times a civil war was on the verge of breaking out.

Salazar astutely attached himself to a certain Rodrigo de Paz, who was a relative of Cortes, and held the office of alguacil mayor. The latter exercised great influence in the country because the partisans of Cortes regarded him as their chief. Sustained by such an one Salazar ordered the arrest of the treasurer and the accountant, and holding them prisoners in their own houses, he began to proceed against their friends and partisans upon whom he inflicted a shameful punishment in public. Again a civil war was imminent and was only avoided, thanks to God and to the sermons of Father Martin de Valencia and some other holy religious men.

As soon as Salazar and Chirino found themselves masters of the government, and the municipal body had taken the oath to them, they began to steal right and left. They arrested and tortured the Indian chiefs to extort their gold and jewels from them. They distributed important *repartimientos* to all their adherents. Rodrigo de Paz having ventured to make some observations, and having sent some religious men to make them understand that they were ruining and losing the country, they arrested him to free themselves from the importunate censures. This arrest provoked a tumult, and for the third time civil war threatened. In spite of all, they tried him, and a few days later they hanged him after inflicting the most cruel tortures on him. Some time before this, they had already, on I know not what pretext, seized the person of the licenciate Zuazo whom they exiled, together with many of the principal adherents of Cortes, so that nobody could oppose their will, and they might be absolute masters of the government, which, in their hands, was the most disorderly imaginable. About this time Salazar and Chirino spread the report that Cortes had been killed by the Indians, and all those who accompanied him on his expedition to Hibueras as well. The friends of Cortes contradicted this news which so irritated the others that they had public proclamation made to the effect that any one bold enough to say that Cortes still lived should receive one hundred lashes. Salazar showed himself especially violent against Cortes, whom he publicly described as a heretic, a traitor, and an usurper. He added that even were Cortes still living, he would never allow him to return to the country; that he had not come to Mexico as factor, but that he carried a secret order from the king to arrest Cortes, and that he would have done this had the latter not left for Hibueras.

The Spaniards were thus again divided into two parties: the one to which Salazar belonged was composed of the former friends of Velasquez; the other, of those of Cortes. Salazar had all of these latter whom he could catch arrested, and the others took refuge in the forests when the news of their chief's death was spread in Mexico. Salazar and Chirino forced the municipal body to recognise them as governors in Your Majesty's name. To confirm the rumour of the

death of Cortes, they celebrated pompous funeral rites in his honour, in the convent of St. Francis. They took possession of and inventoried all he owned, and sold everything at the lowest price, for they were careful to have the appraising done by one Hernando Lopez, one of their warmest partisans. When the sale was finished, they got him to lend them a large sum of gold *pesos* which they sent to Spain for safety. Salazar also pillaged the house of the king of Texcoco, who had accompanied Cortes to Hibueras, saying that he had likewise perished in the expedition. It is certain that he obtained at least five or six thousand gold *pesos*, though it is said that there were more than thirty thousand.

When Cortes and his friends returned to Mexico, they could never learn exactly what had been taken from them, because the man who had made the inventory had fled to Spain where he died in prison at Seville. As for the king of Texcoco he could never recover anything of all they had taken from him.

A respectable woman whose husband had accompanied Cortes, having declared in her grief that the news was false, and that all were well, was ordered by Salazar to receive twenty lashes in public, as a sorceress. He was absolute master of the country, which he governed like a tyrant, and he had enriched his partisans with the Indians and spoils of Fernando Cortes and his companions: for he counted upon their self-interest to defend and support him should the latter reappear; all of which the former friends of Diego Velasquez who had joined his party were quite ready to do. The friends of Cortes, afflicted and despoiled of everything, took refuge in the convents awaiting such help as God might send them. Every week Salazar reviewed his soldiers, the meanest of whom bragged that, if Cortes was still alive, he would either take him prisoner or kill him with his spear.

Cortes during all this time was completely ignorant of all that was happening. He learned finally from a ship that reached Honduras, of Salazar's tyranny, and how he had treated his friends. As he could not leave the country, he sent one of his pages to Mexico bearing a revocation of his former patents and another by which he annulled all the powers of the royal officers who had by their abuses produced such a conflagration. He appointed his kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, governor in their stead. But when the page reached Mexico, Francisco de las Casas had long since disappeared, for Salazar had sent him a prisoner to Spain, in order to get rid of him. The page, fearing that the tyrant might hang him, took refuge in the convent of St. Francis. When the news of his arrival spread through the town, Estrada, Albornoz, Salazar, Chirino, and their partisans were greatly astonished, for there was hardly anyone left who believed Cortes to be still alive. When the former of these saw the letter of Cortes revoking all the powers he had given, they thought it a favourable opportunity to revenge themselves on Salazar, for all the affronts he had inflicted on them. They assembled secretly in the convent of St.

Francis, summoning together all the friends of Cortes who had taken refuge there. The latter did not dare to disobey Your Majesty's principal officers, who ordered them to follow them. They assembled all the alcaldes and regidors in a house and made them deliver to them the staff of justice as lieutenants of the governor, although they had no powers to show. Then they adjourned uproariously to the house of Cortes, where Salazar was installed. The latter had intrenched himself, and had with him many of his friends, well armed, though many had already deserted him. The assailants broke down the doors of the house by means of artillery and captured Salazar amidst such disorder that it is really a miracle that everything was not lost on that day, for the Indians had resolved to profit by that occasion to fall upon the Spaniards, massacre them to the last man, and liberate their country.

Estrada and Albornoz, masters of the person of Salazar and liberators of Chirino who had fled, began to govern in such wise as to fill their pockets. They took a large number of Indians for themselves, distributed others amongst their friends, and began legal proceedings against those who had sided with their enemies. Several of these latter were decapitated or hanged, and the others took refuge in convents, though some were even dragged out from them to be executed. All were deprived of their Indians and persecuted in every possible manner.

While Mexico was being devoured by this conflagration, Cortes came back. When it was known that he had left the port and was approaching the capital, an incredible dismay spread through the city. Everybody wanted to file complaints of the executions, robberies, and vexations which had taken place. Some accused Salazar and Chirino who were prisoners, while others accused Estrada and Albornoz who were governing.

When Cortes beheld the skein he had to untangle, he retired to the convent of St. Francis, where he confessed, received the communion, and afterwards consulted the Superior, and the wisest religious men concerning all that had happened, and the attitude he should adopt. But just at that time, the licenciate Luis de Leon, whom Your Majesty sent as judge of *residencia*, arrived in New Spain. As soon as he had exhibited his powers all the officers of justice consigned their wands of office to him. But a few days later God called him hence. Judging from the good report I have had of him from those who knew him, his death was beyond doubt a punishment which it pleased Providence to inflict on this country. He had designated the licenciate Marcos de Aguilar as his successor, but as the latter was very old, his infirmities prevented him from accomplishing anything. He died within a short time, after having named the treasurer, Estrada, to succeed him.

During the government of Alonso de Estrada and Gonzalo de Sandoval, Nuño de Guzman arrived in the province of Panuco, where Your Majesty sent him as governor. He had been to the island Hispaniola

and Cuba, where he stopped for some time. The inhabitants of these islands, who were for the most part enemies of Cortes and envious of the high position he had obtained, took advantage of Nuño de Guzman's stay there to prejudice the latter against him. Guzman warmly espoused the side of Velasquez, influenced by his kinsman, Gonzalo de Guzman, who is now governor of Cuba, and had been a long time in his service.

As soon as he took possession of his government, he began to show his ill-will by writing a most insolent letter to Cortes, while to the factor, Salazar, who was then in prison, he wrote another filled with proofs of friendship towards him. He kept up a constant correspondence with Salazar and even went to the length of considering as his own personal enemies, all those who maintained that Cortes, far from being a traitor, had rendered very great services to your Majesty. Some of thesc people he caused to be whipped, and he smashed thc teeth of others with a stick, though they were guilty of no other crimes. He even dared to seize some persons on Mexican territory, whom he hanged. He infringed on the jurisdiction of Cortes, taking possession of a number of villages which were held in *encomienda* by inhabitants of Mexico; he inflicted tortures and vexations on the caciques, and established garrisons among them to force them to acknowledge his authority. So irritated were the inhabitants of Mexico by Guzman's conduct that one of the greatest proofs of respect and obedience they could have given Your Majesty was to refrain from taking arms and marching against him. Before leaving for Spain, Cortes exhausted every effort to tranquillise Estrada and Sandoval, who were both very much irritated. They consequently confined themselves to notifying Guzman that he need write them no more such letters as they would neither receive nor read them. Guzman had become the chief of Velasquez's partisans, and the foremost enemy of Cortes both because of the impressions he had already received before he landed in Mexico and also in consequence of the influence which the factor, Salazar, exercised upon him after his arrival. He hoped, with the latter's aid, to suceed in expclling Cortes from his government, and to obtain possession of it himself, for it is the demon of ambition and avarice that has been the cause of all the crimes which have ravaged this unhappy country.

The remainder of the letter deals with the conduct of Nuñez de Guzman, Delgadillo, and others during the absence of Cortes in Spain.

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